Rugby Union Pilkington Cup final: Leicester 9 Sale 3

Tigers hunting for big-game talent

Robert Armstrong at Twickenham

ANDRE JOUBERT, the South Africa full-back, and Abdel Benazzi, flanker and captain of France, head Leicester's shopping list for their campaigns in Europe and at home next season. The Tigers will move swiftly to strengthen their battle-weary squad after securing the consolation prize of the Pilkington Cup here in an error-strewn, try-less final.

Bob Dwyer, their director of rugby, believes the major trophies will be within their grasp when they recruit a couple of top-quality internationals to join Joel Stransky, the Springbok goalkicker whose three penalties left Sale empty-handed.

Leicester's Lions, Martin Johnson, Will Greenwood and Austin Healey, were among the home-grown stars who had helped to make the Tigers the "most successful side in England over a long period", according to Dwyer, and certainly they were essential parts of a rock-solid defence bolstered for the final nerve-racking 15 minutes by Dean Richards.

The great man, who replaced John Wells, reorganised the pack to such good effect that it destroyed Sale's capacity to win quick usable ball, and it was fitting that Johnson, the captain, asked Richards to lead the team up to receive the cup.

"It was difficult for both sides to clear the ball away from the rucks and create movement, but it was a very tense occasion and getting a hand on the opposition's ball is an important part of the game," said Dwyer, who was in no mood to apologise for the limited entertainment on offer to the 75,000 crowd. "People have to get entertainment from the players' efforts to win the game. You have to give marks for defence and applaud the superb tackles several players kept putting in."

Sympathy for Sale, whose positive attempts to move the ball merited at least one try in their first final, has to be tempered by the harsh fact that on the day the Tigers were more streetwise and composed than the Cheshire side. Cup winners also need a touch of luck, something the Sale fly-half Simon Mannix could have done with when a penalty and a drop-goal attempt hit the woodwork in rapid succession.

Sale's potential match-winners, Dewi Morris and Jim Mallinder, who both enjoy driving forward ball in hand, were never allowed to get out of second gear, often losing vital seconds as Leicester hampered release on the Sale side.

"Referees in the northern hemisphere have a different interpretation of the ruck-ball law," said Mannix, a New Zealander, "which means you won't get games with 10 or 12 tries such as you tend to see in the Super 12 competition."



Top of the heap . . . Leicester's captain Martin Johnson, dominant in the air on Saturday, soars to win this line-out ball PHOTO: TOM JENKINS

Sale, though disappointed, will be dangerous floaters in the Premiership, having defeated such major investor clubs as Bath, Harlequins and Saracens this year. It is a measure of their professionalism that in only three weeks' time they will resume training for the new season.

"We, too, will have aspirations to win things," said John Mitchell, the director of coaching. He will use some of the £2.5 million the club have attracted from City sources to contract his best young players, some of whom are being tapped up by rival clubs, and to recruit a couple of senior professionals from New Zealand.

Mitchell at No 8 was the mainstay of Sale's challenge in the loose, which was powerful enough to force Leicester to defend their line for minutes on end yet lacked the cohesion to fashion a short-range score.

"It was terrible that a game of such importance only achieved a score of 9-3 on penalties," said Mitchell. "I came close to being yellow-carded for expressing my concerns about the ruck-ball situation to the referee but I felt I had to keep doing it."

For the moment Leicester can savour their fifth cup triumph in 10 finals since 1978. After a campaign that threatened to run off the rails last month, Dwyer was greatly relieved that his bold stewardship had been vindicated with tangible reward.

"We have to survive on the basis of our own product and our own efforts," he said. "We depend [financially] on people coming through the gate at Welford Road."

It remains to be seen whether Leicester's pride of six Lions can pick up their weary limbs for the fresh challenge of a 13-match tour of South Africa. No doubt they will keep their fingers crossed that Stransky, who kicked the crucial penalty goals in the 13th, 38th and 50th minutes, will be overlooked by the Springbok selectors for the three-Test series.

No such luck for Sale at Twickenham. They could only stand and stare at the work of an ace marksman.

● Melrose defeated Boroughmuir 31-23 in the Scottish Rugby Union Tennents Scottish Cup final at Murrayfield. Rowen Shepherd was Melrose's hero, scoring all but five of his side's points, including a hat-trick of tries.

Motor Racing

Schumacher gives his rivals the slip

Richard Williams in Monte Carlo

WHILE Michael Schumacher's rivals were consulting their computerised weather forecasts, the German looked at the sky. They saw a prediction of clear weather. He saw clouds and sniffed rain. Two hours later his Ferrari splashed across the finish line of the Monaco Grand Prix almost a minute ahead of its nearest rival.

Schumacher's racing brain is always most keenly activated by wet weather, and the race here last Sunday provided further proof. The reward was his, and Ferrari's, first win of 1997, giving him the lead in the drivers' championship after five of the 17 races.

As a chilly wind rocked the yachts anchored in the harbour, Rubens Barrichello brought the Stewart-Ford into second place for the team's first championship points in their debut season, a fine result from 10th on the grid.

The outcome was entirely shaped by the decisions of the drivers and team managers in the half-hour before the start, when spits of rain appeared to carry the threat of something worse. With Heinz-Harald Frentzen on pole position and Jacques Villeneuve third, behind Schumacher, the Williams team trusted the computerised forecast of clearer weather and left both cars on slick dry-weather tyres.

While Frentzen and Villeneuve slithered towards the first corner, Schumacher reaped the rewards of his last-minute decision to switch from his race car, set up for dry weather, to his spare chassis, prepared for wet conditions and fitted with a set of grooved rain tyres. A new high-downforce wing had been hastily bolted on while the car sat on the grid.

Six seconds ahead at the end of the first lap, he continued to open the gap as the rain intensified. Behind him, as the field swarmed chaotically through the twisting streets, the Williams-Renaults had failed even to meet the secondary challenges.

The Jordans of Giancarlo Fisichella and Ralf Schumacher took swift advantage, holding second and third places while Frentzen and Villeneuve fell to seventh and eighth behind the fast-rising Barrichello, the Sauber of Johnny Herbert, and the Prost of Olivier Panis.

Realising their mistake, the Williams drivers made swift pit-stops to change to wet-weather tyres, but Villeneuve gave up after 17 laps with a damaged suspension and his German team-mate fumbled around until lap 40, when he drove into the barrier at the chicane.

The two Arrows car of Pedro Diniz and Damon Hill had no better fortune. One was unable to start and the other failed to finish.

Cryptic crossword by Plodge

Across

1 Spills out the Italian around cold lounges (7)
5 In boy scouts, to admit being posh is a nightmare! (7)
9 Over endless row about football result (5)
10 Directions for designing certain 9 (9)
11 Raised tracks go off course in race to 9 (10)
12 During call, circuit failed to close (4)
14 Flower, single bloomer, came up after an hour (7,4)
18 Prodigal, without identity but with measure. That's better! (1,1)
21 Continental song that told a story (4)
22 Being fickle, so many French follow popular Tories (10)
25 Miserable, in going to fell a tree that makes a fine display (4,1,4)
26 See 17
27 He and she at fault to case the sword (7)
28 Fellows taking part in dreadful deed made an 18 (7)

Down

1 Initially Edward first posed a riddle (6)
2 Circles the French one in the sticks (6)
3 Succeeded in having a word with the Spanish 9 . . . (5,5)
4 . . . after the community rose up against wickedness (5)
5 Being offensive in writing? (9)
6 Butler followed around a bitter 26 (4)
7 Sound entertained in good French resort (8)
8 In a way tiny 9 almost made a bloomer (5,3)
13 How sad that heartless Matthew has a fracture (4,1,5)
15 A feminist, not the monarch, will take on 9 (9)
16 Jams follow sauce made up for noodles (8)
17, 26, 24 Cheap steel part, put out to throw a spanner in the works (5,3,5,4)
19 Scraped a brief 9 with little education (6)
20 Brat without lines will be inclined to listen (6)
23 Sometimes silver is the setting for Swiss gold (5)
24 See 17

Last week's solution

P	L	E	A	S	E		S	M	A	R	T	C	A	R
A		N		A				I		A		O		E
I	N	T	E	N	T		U	N	F	R	A	M	E	D
N		H		D				I		E		P		S
	O	U	R	H	O	U	R	S	O	F	E	A	S	E
		S		I		N		T		Y		N		T
S	H	E	L	L	A	C	K	E	D		A	Y	O	T
Y				L		E		R		D				E
M	E	W	S		F	R	U	I	T	E	A	T	E	R
P		O		A		T		N		L		R		
H	U	M	A	N	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	S	
Y		E		G		I				W		A		L
T	E	N	P	E	N	N	Y		H	A	R	D	T	O
U		I		L		T				R		L		V
M	I	N	D	S	E	Y	E		S	E	V	E	R	E

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The Guardian Weekly

Vol 156, No 21
Week ending May 25, 1997

The Washington Post Le Monde

Blair takes new hope to Ireland

David Sharrock

THE moment of truth for Sinn Fein drew closer last week when Tony Blair offered a meeting without the pre-condition of an IRA ceasefire.

The Prime Minister, in a Belfast speech which drew encouragement from President Bill Clinton, delighted the two main leaders of unionism and nationalism — and finally buried old Labour's united Ireland policy by ruling out British withdrawal for many years to come, declaring: "I believe in the United Kingdom, I value the Union."

He said at the annual Royal Ulster Agricultural Show, the symbolic heartland of Northern Ireland's predominantly rural, conservative society: "My agenda is not a united Ireland — and I wonder just how many see it as a realistic possibility in the foreseeable future."

With barely disguised scepticism, he added: "Of course, those that wish to see a united Ireland without coercion can argue for it, not least in the talks. If they succeeded, we would certainly respect that.

"But none of us in this hall today, even the youngest, is likely to see Northern Ireland as anything but a part of the United Kingdom. That is the reality, because the consent principle is now almost universally accepted."

Sinn Fein was barely able to disguise its disappointment. Martin McGuinness, one of its two MPs, said: "Many nationalists will be disappointed by the pro-unionist emphasis in Mr Blair's speech." But he indicated that he would be taking up Mr Blair's offer of a meeting.

Mr Blair's speech is unlikely to have brought forward a new ceasefire — the IRA will probably wait to see who wins the Irish general election on June 6 before taking any major decisions.

Mr Clinton welcomed Mr Blair's statement as "a balanced and constructive step toward restoring momentum to the peace process".

Tony Blair gets a warm welcome in Armagh PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN LEWIS

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, appeared mollified by Mr Blair's reference to "cross-border arrangements which acknowledge the importance of relationships in the island of Ireland". These would be practical and institutional, said Mr Blair, but "if such arrangements were really threatening to unionists we would not negotiate them".

John Hume, leader of the SDLP party, said people across Ireland owed Mr Blair a "debt of gratitude" and urged Sinn Fein to take up the offer of talks immediately. "It is the most comprehensive speech made by any British prime minister in the last 25 years of our Troubles," he said. "I think he has really opened the door now to creating the circumstances where we can take the gun for ever out of Irish politics."

● The abduction and murder last week of a prominent 62-year-old Catholic, Sean Brown, from Bellaghy, Co Londonderry stoked fears that a loyalist campaign of random sectarian killings had been renewed in Northern Ireland.

Commons protest, page 10
Comment, page 12

Kabila stamps his mark on Kinshasa

Chris McGreal in Kinshasa

ZAIRE'S rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, declared final victory over the Mobutu regime last weekend. He assumed power as his forces moved into Kinshasa, facing little resistance from government troops who threw off their uniforms and fled or marched towards the rebels to surrender.

In a statement read at a news conference in the southeastern city of Lubumbashi, Mr Kabila announced the formation of a government of public salvation, and a "constituent assembly", to be set up within 60 days. He said: "Mr Laurent Désiré Kabila assumes from today the functions of the head of state of the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

The victorious alliance brushed aside international pressure for early elections, saying polls will be held only when reconstruction is under way and the population is re-educated through local collectives.

Deogratias Bugera, secretary-general of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, said 32 years of dictatorship by Mobutu Sese Seko had brainwashed the population into submission. "We must reawaken the population politically. It is our first duty," he said on Monday. "The aim is to avoid the possibility in the future that any one man can confiscate power."

Mr Bugera declined to be drawn on a time-scale for the re-education programme and subsequent elections. But the alliance said it would fulfil its commitment to form a constituent assembly within two months to hammer out a new constitution.

The fall of the capital gives the insurgents the last great prize of the seven-month civil war in which Mr Kabila's forces have swept more than 1,500km across the breadth of Zaire. The rebel leader was due to arrive in Kinshasa and announce his new government on Tuesday.

Hours before the rebels moved in, government soldiers fought each other after the army chief of staff was assassinated by elements of the presidential guard who were apparently angry that he had demanded President Mobutu's resignation and was doing a deal with the rebels to end the war without further bloodshed.

General Mahele Lieko Bokungu, defence minister and army chief of staff, was shot as he tried to convince presidential guard soldiers that there was no point in offering further resistance to the rebels.

There were no reports of serious resistance as the insurgents first seized Kinshasa's international airport, from which Mr Mobutu fled into exile last Friday, then moved into the capital from at least two directions.

The 56-year-old rebel leader, who has opposed Mr Mobutu for more than 30 years, said he had spoken to army generals in Kinshasa and they had assured him that all the military were willing to swear allegiance to the new government.

In Kinshasa a few dared to venture out with welcoming banners in the expectation that Mr Kabila's forces were not far away. But most Kinshasans stayed at home, dreading the retreating army more than the rebel approach.

There was sporadic shooting in parts of the capital, and occasional mortar fire, but in a city of 5 million there were few reports of deaths. In the last hours before the rebels moved in, many soldiers discarded their uniforms and fled. Young men in civilian clothes, some missing limbs and hobbling on crutches,

continued on page 3

Key to peace, page 7
Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 16

Austria	AS30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 460	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Britain to cut tobacco links to sport

Nick Varley

THE British government announced this week that its plans to ban all tobacco advertising would extend to cigarette sponsorship of sport.

The Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, confirmed on Monday that a white paper to ban tobacco advertising will "cover all forms of tobacco advertising, including sponsorship".

Mr Dobson said: "We recognise that some sports, like some smokers, are heavily dependent on tobacco sponsorship. We do not wish to harm these sports. We will therefore give them time and help to reduce their dependency on the weed and replace it with sponsorship from more benign sources."

There was angry reaction from the sports world, which will lose around $15 million worth of sponsorship each year. Golf, cricket and snooker all get backing from cigarette companies.

Robert Holmes, of the British Darts Organisation, whose two flagships events are both sponsored by Embassy cigarettes, was most forthright: "Darts is under threat as a result of this. It's a huge blow at a time when the sport cannot afford it. We've recently signed a new contract and we want the sponsorship to continue. We are not talking about an illegal substance. We are talking about something that is freely available."

Clive Turner, executive director of the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association, said: "Can you really imagine that a non-smoker watching a piece of sponsored sport is then going to rush out and start smoking? It's ludicrous. But Sir Rodney Walker, chairman of the Rugby League, admitted that the sport was already looking for new backers.

One sport that may be able to get around the ban is Formula One motor racing. The latest computer technology could allow the sport to sidestep laws which Mr Dobson confirmed are to be drawn up later this year.

The electronic wizardry would enable trackside hoardings and structures to be turned into "virtual advertisements", which could be amended to suit different markets — and comply with different countries' laws.

Spectators at the events would see no advertising at all, just the plain blue boards that are used as backdrops for the electronic ads. A similar system is used for television weather bulletins.

een land where cars provide no free rides

IT IS not only the British who "regard anyone who does not have a car as some sort of deviant" (Green homes for people without cars, April 27). Similar attitudes prevail everywhere. The private possession and use of a car is regarded as a basic freedom or even a "right". Yet the untrammelled exercise of that "right" is one of the reasons we now find ourselves living, in former Australian environment minister Moss Cass's telling phrase, "on an alien planet" (April 20).

Politically explosive though the issue may be, the only way to deter planners and architects from automatically designing the car into their schemes is through public policies favouring initiatives that deliberately design it out. Research recently published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Eclac) shows that the mere existence of alternatives, in the form of public transport networks, does not entice drivers away from their cars. During the rush hour in the Chilean capital, Santiago, the number of car journeys per km that take place in the vicinity of the metro lines far exceeds the number that take place in greater Santiago as a whole.

A similar pattern has been observed in many of the world's most populous cities, where congestion has worsened even as public transport has expanded. The inescapable conclusion is that only the introduction of restrictions on car use and parking, as a complement to public transport policy, will make drivers turn to the alternatives.

The global triumvirate of car manufacturers, road builders and oil companies has actively sought the demise of public transport in some developed countries and is now beguiling developing countries with the "promise" of cars for all, thanks to the new "free" market conventions.

Providing each citizen with road space for a privately financed individual car is no doubt a cheap and relatively quick short-term solution to developing countries' transport problems. However, for governments with the courage and independence to plan for the long term and incorporate environmental objectives into their planning, it may still not be too late to leap-frog directly to a more balanced stage of development (assuming they can enlist the support of such conservative financial institutions as the World Bank). In this way they could avoid our mistake of not just designing the car into our lives, but designing our lives into the car.

This is no pipe-dream, as can be seen from the exemplary public transport system of the city of Curitiba, in Brazil. Let us hope that national and local governments in developed countries, too, soon begin to display an independence of mind that may enable their citizens to say once more, "We run a car", rather than "The car runs us".
Nigel Lindup,
Santiago, Chile

I AM surprised that a former Australian minister of the environment would be so ill-informed as to perpetuate the myth that "nature cannot manage nuclear waste". Is he not aware that so-called nuclear waste is a natural product of a physical process which has taken place on earth long before man appeared? The facts were well documented as long ago as 1977, when the International Atomic Energy Agency held a conference to discuss the Oklo natural fission reactors that operated in Africa millions of years ago. These natural reactors produced the same kinds of wastes as do the man-made reactors today, and shut themselves down safely when they had used up their uranium fuel.

The problem of nuclear waste management is one of public perceptions, and the contributions of Moss Cass are not likely to assist in making the decisions that are needed.
A R Burge,
Victoria, BC, Canada

Money listens and learns

IT WAS with intense annoyance that I read the article "Expat parents pin hopes on Labour" (May 11) documenting the hopes of Anglophone private schools in Europe for financial support from the new British government.

As an expatriate whose vote helped to get Labour elected, and whose daughter is currently doing just fine in the Swiss state school system, I sincerely hope that they are whistling in the wind. Subsidies for schools teaching in their languages from the French, German, Japanese and other governments have a clear rationale. In most countries non-Anglophone foreign communities have difficulties in maintaining their culture and language. Anglophone culture, on the other hand, is flooding the world, and English-language schools need no subsidies because they are filled with the children of non-Anglophone parents who want their children to have the advantages of fluent English.

British expatriates experience difficulties in Europe, not because their children cannot gain access to British culture, but because of their own generally appalling level of achievement in any language other than their own. The best thing that they can do for their children in Europe is to send them to their local state school.

If the Labour government means what it says about prioritising "education, education and education", then its priority must be to end Britain's uniquely divisive system in which the affluent buy their way out of state education. It must pump resources into inner-city schools in Britain, which really need them, not into subsidising the export of élitism.
(Dr) Tom Smith,
Basel, Switzerland

YOUR article "University intake tilted toward rich" (April 27) at least makes the implication that money is the key to obtaining a tertiary education. Those that have it, get it for their children, and those that do not, cannot.

It was just this fallacy that drove the Whitlam government in Australia to remove fees in the 1970s at a time when there was a disproportionate representation of the well-to-do postcodes at Melbourne university.

The fact that this had no effect on enrolments made the previously unconsidered and unpalatable alternative viable — that a section of the population does not regard tertiary education as desirable. The real issue is: that those who have education — even the relatively unsuccessful Anglo-Saxon version — want it for their children, and those who haven't, do not.
Richard Morrish,
Tolo, Greece

After-effects of empire

RE Ian Black's article, "Remnants of British Empire demand full citizen rights" (May 4), I back their legitimate request 100 per cent. Britain is the only country in the world that discriminates on types of citizenship.

In St Martin, a half-French, half-Dutch Caribbean island, the people on the French side are fully French and on the Dutch side fully Dutch. This gives them the right to live and work in any European Union nation.

A few miles off St Martin lies the British island of Anguilla. On the little boat that takes you across, I was sitting next to an Anguillan. His passport said "British Passport — Anguilla". He told me he needed an entry certificate to go to the UK. His neighbours in St Martin, albeit not British, may settle freely in the UK.

Is Tony Blair going to do anything about this injustice? I hope so.
Alain Hernu,
Andresy, France

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB ends her review of a book on decline in Western history with "the perspective of two centuries of its rise and endurance" (Doom and gloom merchants' crescendo of despair, May 4). This time span has special interest to white Australians, who tend to think of England as being the main actor in Western history over most of that period.

Some 200 years ago English society was corrupt, with a high crime rate filling its jails and prison hulks, where some of our forebears waited for their passage here. Some 100 years ago it was famous for its law and order, for the probity of its politicians, civil servants and businessmen. Today it is a corrupt society, setting up prison ships again.

In the past 20 years much of the rise in egalitarianism and civilisation has been largely reversed, and neither New Labour nor anyone else is likely to change this process.
J T Wearne,
Fremantle, Australia

Answer to a burning question

YOUR editorial on the tobacco industry (Smoking out the true liability, May 11) rightly points out that costs of past damage must fall squarely on the industry itself. And you are right that it is more important to seek ways of protecting future generations from tobacco addiction.

It would help enormously if one of the strangest international anomalies were eliminated. International travellers are allowed to import 200 cigarettes duty free into their country of destination. Such allowances send all the wrong signals and provide the tobacco industry with important marketing opportunities at every international airport.

This allowance is part of a 1953 Convention on International Travel, which covers such matters as passports, visas, tourism, and duty-free allowances. It is unrealistic for one country to act unilaterally. But now that the tobacco industry admits to its product's addictive and lethal effects, the signatories to the 1953 Convention should review their agreement and abolish duty-free tobacco imports altogether.
David Coy,
Hamilton, New Zealand

Briefly

AS A volunteer letter writer for Amnesty International, I am aware of some of the atrocities committed against journalists in various oppressive regimes.

But suppose a small country, a democracy, has no mass media outlet that is not controlled by business interests determined to ignore the existence of opposing viewpoints, parading the opinions of business over and over again? As A J Liebling has said, "Freedom of the press is limited to those who own one". I fear that in too many cases the purpose of journalism is not to inform the public but, rather, to generate advertising revenue.
Lois Griffiths,
Christchurch, New Zealand

YOU omitted to mention the benefits of sickle cell anaemia (Blood brothers apart, May 18). The reason it is so prevalent among people in tropical countries is that the gene provides protection against malaria. This is a practical example of Darwinian survival of the fittest.

One-third of the population of Nigeria has the sickle cell gene precisely because it enabled them to survive childhood without succumbing to malaria.
(Dr) Martin Price,
Dinas Powys, Wales

NAOMI WOLF'S Promiscuities (Writer who put sex back into feminism, May 4) should be required reading for all teachers responsible for sex education, but particularly so with children of primary-school age. As long as female fertility is taught in a coy and semi-secretive manner by school nurses and from a medical perspective, we cannot hope for equality of responsibility. Women will continue to be perceived as a means to service men's sexual needs and will not be encouraged to learn how to achieve sexual pleasure.
Elizabeth M Corrigan,
Sollom, Lancashire

WILLIAM Hague thinks he'll be able to "bond" with voters in the North because he went to a comprehensive school there. I don't recall any smarmy, spotty Tory kids like Hague at my northern comprehensive. Come to think of it, there was one, but everyone hated him.
John Hudson,
London

I WAS very pleased to read the thorough and thoughtful review of my book on Noam Chomsky (May 4). Allow me to note, however, that the film Manufacturing Consent was inadvertently attributed to me rather than to its producers, Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick.
Robert F Barsky,
University of Western Ontario,
London, Ontario, Canada

The Guardian Weekly
May 25, 1997 Vol 156 No 21
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Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
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Kinshasa celebrates

Continued from page 1
made their way towards the Congo river in the hope of finding a boat to Brazzaville. Some soldiers hijacked vehicles to make their getaway.

A long double column of presidential guard soldiers walked disconsolately to await surrender. Officers moved their families into the Intercontinental Hotel while they arranged boats. Then they returned, threw off their uniforms, bundled their wives and children into any available transport, and took off for the river.

Women dripping in gold jewellery — the mark of those who have grown rich on Mr Mobutu's coat-tails — were hustled through the lobby and into cars. One woman wept uncontrollably, perhaps in fear of the immediate danger, perhaps because she might never return to the country which has treated her well at the expense of so many others.

Mr Mobutu's son Kongolo claimed to take charge of the army after Gen Mahele's assassination. Nicknamed Saddam Hussein in Zaire for his ruthlessness, Kongolo promised that there would be no resistance, and promptly arranged his own getaway. He, too, retreated to the Intercontinental, surrounded by dozens of bodyguards to await a boat across the Congo river. By last Saturday afternoon he was in Brazzaville. All he left behind were his fleet of luxury cars, riddled with bullets and stripped.


Jubilant youths on the streets of the capital last weekend PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID GUTTENFELDER

Sporadic killings continued throughout the weekend as some of Kinshasa's residents, and some rebels, took vengeance on 32 years of dictatorship by striking at those who had served the ousted regime. Looters moved in on the Mobutu family's property. Rebels stood by and smiled. Other civilians looted the former élite's food stores and homes.

But although Red Cross workers who collected bodies from various shoot-outs last Saturday night gave a provisional death toll of at least 200, most Kinshasans celebrated the largely peaceful fall of the capital and the eradication of the old Zaire.

The victorious rebels consolidated their hold on Kinshasa by pouring in thousands more troops. Hundreds marched into the luxury Gombe district to roars of approval from some of Kinshasa's élite. The young rebels in wellington boots and rubber sandals were exhausted. They asked for water and food.

In the city centre groups of young people sporting white headbands jogged behind the conquerors, chanting "Liberation, Kabila, Congo".

Word spread that Mr Mobutu had finally fled for Morocco. With him went the name Zaire and other trappings. The new flag — gold stars on a blue background — was hoisted and television was swiftly back on air, blaring out an unfamiliar national anthem. But much more of Mobutuism still remains to be erased.

Some rebels had their own way of trying it. Three men marched a forlorn Mobutu soldier into bushes next to the river bank. There was one shot and they emerged carrying the victim's boots. In other areas civilians sought retribution.

South Africa immediately recognised the new regime, as did Rwanda and Burundi which backed the rebel force. Britain has also recognised it and the former Zairean embassy in London is flying the new flag.

Moscow and Nato look to arms cuts

John Palmer in Strasbourg, Ian Black in London and Ian Traynor in Bonn

NATO and Russia plan to negotiate big reductions in their conventional arsenals in Europe as part of an agreement reached in Moscow last week which opens the way to a staged expansion of the alliance to former communist countries.

As central European leaders voiced relief at agreement on a Nato-Russia charter, Nato diplomats said that attention would now shift to finalising the candidates for membership, to be named at a summit in Madrid in July.

The American and Russian presidents, Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin, are to attend the formal charter-signing ceremony in Paris next week, and will be joined by Tony Blair and other alliance heads of government.

It is clear that Russia, not Nato, made the largest concessions. Nato assured the Russian government that it has no intention of stationing nuclear weapons or large concentrations of foreign troops on the soil of the candidate countries — notably Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. But all three will be helped to invest in their military infrastructure so that Nato troops can react to any future crisis.

The extent of the military reinforcement of the new Nato states will depend on negotiations to secure far-reaching reductions in the conventional forces of Russia and a potentially expanded Nato.

Moreover the West now accepts the need for asymmetrical arms cuts in Russia's favour to correct the present imbalance favouring Nato.

Under a new charter council, Russia will be consulted on a range of security issues for the first time and will join Nato military command in crisis situations.

But the Kremlin will not have any veto over which countries join Nato. It now seems certain that the first countries to join in 1999 will be Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, although Slovenia may be included, not least because it will provide a common land frontier between Nato and Hungary.

The day-to-day management of the new council will be the joint responsibility of the Nato secretary-general, the Russian ambassador to Nato and a representative of the country holding the rotating presidency of the Nato council.

In the long term the new partnership with Russia — combined with the growing security role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union's defence arm, the Western European Union — will significantly change the alliance.

President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic welcomed the agreement as a "success" which would usher Prague into Nato without breaching relations with Moscow.

Polish officials and commentators said the main obstacle to Poland's smooth admission to Nato had been removed.

President Emil Constantinescu of Romania said he was satisfied, and Hungarian officials said the central Europeans were the real winners.

The German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and Mr Yeltsin discussed the pact by telephone and agreed East and West had reached a satisfactory accommodation.

● Mr Yeltsin gave himself, his ministers and thousands of top bureaucrats two months to declare their real incomes and property — and that of their families — in a campaign for honesty and open government. The catch is that it will be President Yeltsin who decides whether to make the information public.

Martin Walker, page 6

Bonn accused of cooking the books on deficit

Denis Staunton in Bonn

GERMANY'S finance minister, Theo Waigel, rejected opposition calls for his resignation last week as public outrage grew at plans to revalue Bundesbank gold reserves in an effort to plug a gaping hole in public finances.

A sell-off of national telecommunications holdings, tax increases and spending cuts were also discussed by the government in its increasingly desperate race to qualify for the single European currency.

Addressing an emergency session of the Bundestag, Mr Waigel blamed Germany's record unemployment of 4.3 million for a fall in revenues that will leave a DM18 billion ($10.5 billion) gap in this year's budget.

Newspapers usually friendly to the government joined economic experts and opposition politicians in expressing anger at the gold revaluation plan and the government's decision to cash in some of its 70 per cent stake in Deutsche Telekom, despite a promise not to sell any of the shares before 2000.

Wilhelm Hankel, a currency expert and former adviser to the economics and finance ministries, accused Mr Waigel of cooking the books and claimed that the gold plan was unconstitutional.

"If any private company manipulates profits, it loses the confidence of the banks and its shares go through the floor. This is no different," he said.

Despite Mr Waigel's insistence that he has no plans to sell any of the gold reserves, the move is seen by many Germans as a violation of the Bundesbank's independence.

Experts pointed out that the reserves do not belong to the state but to the whole German economy, and their purpose is to benefit the people as a whole during an emergency.

Although European Union rules mean that the gold revaluation will not affect Bonn's chances of keeping this year's budget deficit below the 3 per cent required for membership of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), it could help to keep Germany's public debt below the crucial figure of 60 per cent of gross domestic product.

The latest, increasingly desperate measures testify to Chancellor Kohl's determination that EMU should be launched as planned on January 1, 1999, even if the entry criteria have to be fudged.

The Week

PRESIDENT Clinton set US medical scientists the goal of developing an Aids vaccine by 2007. He announced that a special research centre would be established and said that the vaccine should be "first great triumph" of the 21st century.
Vaccine fear, page 25

THE number of illegal immigrants deported from the US rose again in the first three months of this year, to 40,822, in a trend that began six months ago when the Immigration and Naturalisation Service received more funds and greater powers.

SOUTH Africa's National Party said it would no longer co-operate with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, saying the panel was biased against it.

SOUTH Korean prosecutors arrested President Kim Young-sam's son, Kim Hyun-chul, on charges of accepting bribes and illicit political funds, and influence-peddling.
Washington Post, page 15

HUNDREDS of people were reported dead in a cyclone that battered coastal areas of Bangladesh and triggered a nationwide disaster alert.

A HANOI court sentenced eight Vietnamese, including police and border guards, to death by firing squad for drug trafficking.

THE northern Afghan militia leader, Abdul Rashid Dostam, lost control of Faryab province to mutineers who joined forces with the rival Taliban militia.

PRESIDENT Clinton renewed China's most favoured nation trade status, but it has yet to be approved by Congress.

BRITAIN and the US have thrown their weight behind Mary Robinson, the Irish president, who is the front runner to become the next UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

MARATHON talks between political parties in Albania have failed to produce agreement on ground rules for planned elections, which most parties are now threatening to boycott.

MOURAD Amara, an asylum-seeker who was thought to have been killed after being deported to Algeria from Britain, is alive and well, the Home Office said in London.

GIUSEPPE De Santis, a leading figure among the post-war Italian film-makers, has died of a heart attack, aged 80. He directed the first commercially successful neo-realism film, Bitter Rice.

Foreign minister Ali Alatas addresses an election rally in Jakarta. PHOTOGRAPH: MUCHTAR ZAKARIA

Indonesia braced for election clashes

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

INDONESIAN security forces were preparing for trouble this week despite an attempt by party leaders to halt big rallies and parades in the hope of averting further violence before the May 29 general election.

Rallies were stopped after a rash of violent incidents showed political tempers flaring in the run-up to the vote. The three parties contesting the elections have agreed that on each day they will campaign in different parts of the Muslim-majority country from their rivals.

But with electioneering reaching a climax, it is unclear whether party leaders can control spontaneous demonstrations by supporters.

Foreign commentators have condemned as a sham the five-yearly polls that have returned the ruling party, Golkar, for the past 30 years. The authorities have further improved the odds for Golkar by imposing unprecedented restrictions on campaigning, in response to recent outbursts of ethnic and religious violence around Indonesia.

The constraints have kept campaigning subdued for the most part, Jakarta-based observers say. Most of the 70 people who have died in the run-up have been killed in traffic accidents, and only a few in fighting.

But supporters of the three parties allowed to contest the election have flouted campaign regulations with apparent impunity. Golkar's opponents have taken advantage of openings to vent what Indonesian analysts see as more open defiance of President Suharto than in previous elections.

Troops and baton-wielding riot police intervened last weekend to halt clashes when Golkar supporters drove into a district of the capital dominated by backers of the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP) and challenged residents to pull down PPP posters.

Troops earlier fired teargas and rubber bullets to disperse a stone-throwing crowd of several thousand PPP supporters angered by a police decision to prevent their marching down a street previously open to Golkar. Several incidents of violence were reported in other big cities on Java, the heartland of PPP support.

But the violence is not expected to have a bearing on the result of an election that Golkar has already expressed its determination to win with more than 70 per cent of the vote.

Washington Post, page 15

Turkish troops attack Kurds in northern Iraq

Chris Nuttall in Ankara and Agencies

TURKEY'S armed forces have killed nearly 1,000 Kurdish separatists during an incursion into northern Iraq that began last week, the state-run Anatolia news agency reported.

It quoted military sources as saying that 998 guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had been killed and 141 captured.

The military sources gave no details of troop casualties, but said 12 soldiers had been killed last Saturday. The pro-Kurdish MED-TV said more than 30 Turkish soldiers had been killed in fighting with the rebels.

The thousands of Turkish troops backed by tanks, planes and helicopter gunships poured into northern Iraq in a combined operation with an Iraqi Kurdish faction against Turkish Kurdish separatist fighters.

The Turkish foreign ministry announced that *peshmerga* guerrillas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) had launched an operation against the PKK, which has been fighting for an independent state or autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

"After a request from the KDP for help, the Turkish armed forces have been providing air and artillery support and Turkish troops have entered northern Iraq," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Sermet Atacanli.

The defence minister, Turhan Tayan, told a news conference that Turkey was giving what amounted to "humanitarian aid" to the KDP and, as soon as the operation was over, the troops would pull out.

The KDP, emboldened by the alliance with Turkish troops, drove PKK Kurds out of a key northern city in a bitter settling of scores, an Iraqi opposition group said on Monday. A spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress said that the KDP had overrun all six offices of the PKK in Irbil and executed prisoners.

Journalists have been barred from the region by Turkish troops and the KDP.

Baghdad condemned "this new Turkish military aggression against the sovereignty of Iraq and its territorial integrity" and called on Ankara to "withdraw its invading troops from inside Iraqi territory immediately".

Western diplomats in the Turkish capital were sceptical of the government's claims of limited support for a KDP operation. One described the KDP's involvement as a "fig leaf" of cover for a Turkish offensive.

There had been no serious clashes between the KDP and the PKK in the region since five months of fighting in 1995. The KDP had allied briefly with President Saddam Hussein's forces in August to oust a rival Iraqi Kurdish faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), from the regional capital, Irbil. That led to American bombing raids on southern Iraq and two months of factional fighting before a ceasefire.

Tens of thousands of Turkish troops had been massing on the border with Iraq for nearly a month. But the military insisted they wanted to prevent PKK infiltration rather than cross over. Every spring, PKK guerrillas return from bases in northern Iraq to resume their campaign in southeastern Turkey against the security forces.

Sources in the region said as many as 50,000 Turkish troops had crossed the Iraqi border at several points.

Japan's nuclear bid stymied

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

JAPAN'S plans to develop a self-sufficient nuclear industry lie in tatters after news that the organisation spearheading the programme for the past 30 years tried to cover up a series of leaks, fires and explosions.

The state-owned Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC), established in 1967 to pioneer the programme, is being investigated by public prosecutors and a government committee for failing to disclose information about the worst nuclear accident in Japan's history.

The March 11 accident at PNC's reprocessing plant at Tokaimura, 160km northeast of Tokyo, occurred when an explosion following a fire in the bitumisation facility sent gas into the air, exposing 37 people to low-level radiation. Concern about the incident was compounded when PNC's employees falsified reports about the time of the accident, shredded photographs of the blast site and lied about the extent of the leak.

This was neither the first nor the last such incident. In December 1995 PNC was castigated for failing to release details about a leak of radioactive sodium from its Monju fast-breeder reactor. Last month PNC officials waited 30 hours before disclosing information about a radioactive tritium leak, the 11th in less than three years, at its Fugen reactor.

In the wake of these accidents the government has ordered the closure of four of PNC's six major sites, including Tokaimura, Monju and Fugen, bringing the corporation's central activities to a standstill.

An official at the Science and Technology Agency, who declined to be named, said this marked the beginning of the end for PNC. "The feeling now is that PNC should be disbanded and as much of its activities placed in the private sector as possible."

The committee set up after the Tokaimura accident to consider reforming PNC is expected to report in June. According to Japanese newspapers, the government hopes to break up the state corporation by 2000, permanently shutting down at least one plant, privatising some operations and switching research to other public agencies.

This would seriously set back Japan's goal of creating a stable energy supply through the establishment of a plutonium-based nuclear fuel cycle. Because it has almost no natural energy resources, Japan has continued on this project even though other countries have long since abandoned similar plans on account of the cost and the technical difficulties.

Although nuclear power provides a third of Japan's electricity, public disquiet about the accidents and cover-ups has grown.

Inquiry damns treatment of Aborigines

Alan Thornhill in Canberra

AN INQUIRY appointed by the government has called the 20th century policy of forcibly separating Aboriginal children from their parents for adoption "genocide" and a "crime against humanity".

From 1918 until as late as the 1970s, "half-caste" Aboriginal children were being taken from their parents under the misguided belief that Aborigines were a doomed race and it was the only humane alternative.

Authorities created a "stolen generation" in a supposed effort to save a dying race by integrating its young into the white majority. Light-skinned Aboriginal children were seized, and then handed out to white families. Dark-skinned children were put in bleak orphanages.

In 1994, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 10 per cent of Aborigines over the age of 25 had been separated from their parents in childhood, although other surveys put the figure as high as 47 per cent.

The government report, Bringing Them Home, has been sent to the attorney-general but has not been publicly released. But leaked copies are circulating among the media.

More than 500 Aborigines told the inquiry that they had been separated from their parents, at least half of them between the ages of one and five. One in six reported beatings and excessive punishment, while one in five reported being sexually abused in foster homes, orphanages, institutions or work places.

The Aboriginal social justice commissioner, Mick Dodson, said on Tuesday, "Some of these people are absolute wrecks, through no fault of their own they're ruined souls, their whole existence lurches from a tragic history to a tragic future, they live each day the trauma of what happened."

The practice was genocide as defined by United Nations conventions that Australia has signed, and was a "crime against humanity", the report said. It recommends that Australia observe a national "sorrow day" for the tens of thousands of Aborigines whose lives were irrevocably altered, usually for the worse, by the policy.

It also calls for compensation for Aborigines, an idea that the conservative government of the prime minister, John Howard, is already countering. The Sydney Morning Herald on Tuesday quoted senior government officials as saying in background briefings that the government would not be sympathetic to claims for compensation, and that the report lacked credibility.

The Howard government has already cut funding for Aboriginal health and welfare, and is trying to water down a High Court ruling that says Aborigines may still have access to lands leased to farmers so they can observe religious rites and other traditions. — *AP*

● A new euthanasia controversy flared up in Australia last week after a doctor who helped four patients to die legally unveiled a "coma machine" designed to keep the dying unconscious.

The move came as Dr Philip Nitschke, who led the fight for the Northern Territories voluntary euthanasia code, overturned by the senate in March, was due to face police questioning over the death of another patient.

Dr Nitschke said his new device used pain-killing drugs to guarantee that the terminally ill would never regain consciousness. He claimed the machine would expose the hypocrisy of current laws which allow doctors to induce death through drug overdoses under the guise of treating pain.

Women's rights to fore in Iran poll

Kathy Evans in Tehran

THIS IS a difficult time to be a woman of political ambition in Iran. As the country prepares to go to the polls on Friday to elect a new president, the status and rights of women have emerged as one of the main campaign issues.

Last week, the Council of Guardians, which vets candidates for their commitment to total obedience to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, took the unpopular decision to reject all of the nine women candidates. No reason was given, but many believe their applications were thrown out simply because they were women. That view was reinforced by a statement from the council's secretary, Hassan Ganj, that in his view Islam barred women from running for presidential office.

Since the Islamic revolution 18 years ago, women loyal to the regime have been working behind the scenes to modernise its attitude. These quiet efforts have coincided with a growing number of women making it into parliament and top official posts. In recent months, women have secured jobs as a deputy minister, as a district mayor in Tehran and as a senior diplomat overseas.

Now women are determined to use their vote to choose presidential candidates sympathetic to women's rights. In short, it is pay-back time.

The new determined mood of the Islamic feminists has thrown the leading clerics into confusion. Last week the man tipped to succeed in the presidential election, the conservative hardline cleric and parliamentary speaker, Nateq Nouri, appeared to have lost the all-important women's vote.

"Nouri will put us into *chadors* and take the revolution back to its early radical days," said a middle-class woman activist. "Not just women, but the whole country will go backwards. He will be a disaster."

The cleric has alienated many women by promising a more rigorous enforcement of female dress codes. Last week he committed another huge *faux pas* by refusing to be interviewed by Iran's most influential women's magazine, Zanan (Woman). The magazine had asked him whether he would agree to appoint a woman minister in his government, and how he saw the status of women in politics and society. Sources say he refused to answer because Zanan had recently used a portrait of a veiled woman on its cover.

Mr Nouri's main rival, Ayatollah Khatemi has, in contrast, made women's rights central to his platform. He is backed by liberals and intellectuals for his support for greater freedom of speech and he has promised to appoint a woman to his Cabinet. Western diplomats in Tehran say there is speculation that, if Ayatollah Khatemi succeeds, he will make Iran's most influential woman, Faiza Rafsanjani, daughter of outgoing President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, vice-president.

● Prospects for a long freeze in high-level relations between Europe and Tehran rose last weekend when Iran's foreign minister insisted Germany "rectify" a recent decision by a Berlin court accusing Iran's most senior officials of authorising the murder of four dissidents.

"What happened in that court was not a legal procedure but something political. It is not defensible and they must correct it," Ali Akbar Velayati told a Tehran news conference.

His words suggest no German ambassador will be allowed in Tehran unless the court's verdict is reversed, which could mean a long period in which several European Union countries, having withdrawn their ambassadors in April, keep them out in solidarity with Germany.

Irish PM puts faith in Celtic tiger

David Sharrock

THE Irish Republic's general election campaign got under way last week, when the prime minister, John Bruton, asked President Mary Robinson to dissolve parliament and name June 6 as polling day.

Mr Bruton, leader of the Fine Gael party, is gambling on going to the polls five months earlier than necessary by associating himself with the economic miracle of the Celtic Tiger.

He became taoiseach (prime minister) 28 months after forming the first three-party coalition following the collapse of the previous government of Fianna Fail and Labour.

But his first electoral test as the country's leader and his bid to stay in office may fail, polls indicate. All the surveys suggest Mr Bruton and his alliance with Labour and Democratic Left could be ousted by a coalition of Fianna Fail, now led by Bertie Ahern, and the Progressive Democrats.

Mr Bruton is lagging in the opinion polls, 14 points behind Mr Ahern. With little in terms of policy differences between them, both plan campaigns built on presentation rather than substance.

In Mr Bruton's favour are the best economic results in the state's history. The Irish leader is following John Major's lead, perhaps unwisely, in banking on the electorate not wanting to change horses. His campaign slogan, after just 29 months in office, is "secure your future".

As in the British general election, Northern Ireland is not an issue, but Mr Ahern broke party ranks last week to meet the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, and will be emphasising that the last Fianna Fail government, led by Albert Reynolds, helped secure an IRA ceasefire, while under Mr Bruton it was lost.

Mr Bruton has been considerably more pro-British in his dealings with the Northern Ireland peace process, attempting to reach out to unionists as well as nationalists.

Most observers in Dublin, bearing in mind the complex proportional representation system, believe the race is too close to call.

The present position of parties in the 166-strong Dail is government parties — Fine Gael 46 seats, Irish Labour 32, Democratic Left 6; opposition parties — Fianna Fail 68, Progressive Democrats 8, others 6.

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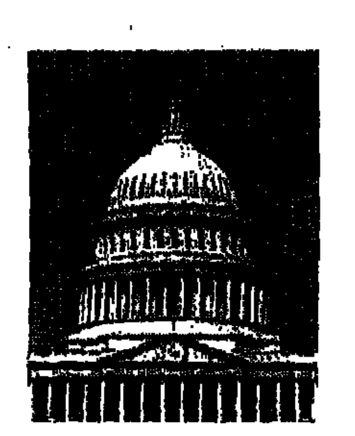
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Nato deal revives Marshall's vision



The US this week

Martin Walker

JOURNALISTS are often bad at seeing the significance of great events. Perhaps the most important post-war event for Europe was the announcement, 50 years ago next month, of the Marshall Aid plan. America's commitment not just to the defence of Western Europe against the Soviet Union, but to the rebuilding of its economy as a future commercial rival, was seen as no big deal at the time.

In the next day's New York Times, the first headline read "Truman Calls Hungary Coup 'Outrage'", followed by "Demands Russians Agree to Inquiry". It was only the third deck that said "Marshall Pleads for European Unity".

Marshall's deputy, Dean Acheson, suspecting the hacks might miss the point, personally briefed three British journalists on its importance, and advised them to tell their editors to send full copies of the speech to Ernest Bevin at the Foreign Office.

As keen students of the Marshall-Acheson years, and infused with the belief that their own stewardship would prove equally historic, President Bill Clinton and his national security team have spared no effort to ensure that the media present Russia's agreement last week to Nato's enlargement as an epochal event.

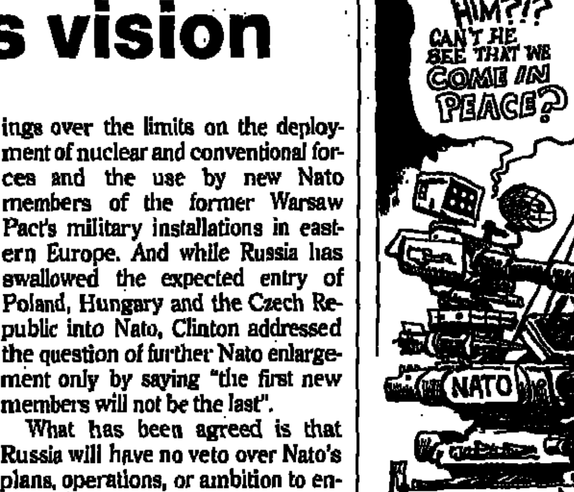
"This is a historic step closer to a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe for the first time in history," Clinton enthused, after his national security staff had formally endorsed the full text of the agreement reached in Moscow. He skated over the precise details of the understandings over the limits on the deployment of nuclear and conventional forces and the use by new Nato members of the former Warsaw Pact's military installations in eastern Europe. And while Russia has swallowed the expected entry of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into Nato, Clinton addressed the question of further Nato enlargement only by saying "the first new members will not be the last".

What has been agreed is that Russia will have no veto over Nato's plans, operations, or ambition to enlarge yet further. But there will be a separate council, on which Russia will have a seat, that will reach its own accords by consensus. If, say, Russia and Nato are to continue their successful joint peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, the council must be unanimous. In this sense, Clinton was right to say that Russia will have "a voice but not a veto" over Nato matters, and President Boris Yeltsin was right to insist that Russia will have a veto over anything that affects its own concerns. This is the diplomatic equivalent of that clever deal under which Russian troops in Bosnia are incorporated into a US army division, but not explicitly under Nato command.

The Clinton White House sees Russia's agreement to a larger Nato as the first step in a much longer process, and part of its self-imposed task is to prepare the American establishment not just for this year's enlargement, but for the long haul.

The long-term view projects Hungary, Poland and the Czechs as full alliance members by the time Nato celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1999, with Austria, Slovenia and perhaps Romania by then also starting the transition process into the club. By the time they are full members, in 2003, the next phase will include at least one of the Baltic states, probably Estonia, but this could depend on those traditional neutral states, Finland and Sweden, joining a Nato that by then will no longer be a military alliance aimed at anyone, but a new transatlantic security system.

This alliance is meant to grow hand-in-hand with the socioeconomic structure of the European Union itself. By 2010, some of the Balkan and remaining Baltic states could be members, paving the way for the inclusion of Ukraine and Russia within a transformed Nato and a transformed Europe each umbilically linked to North America.



All this is but a gleam in the eye of very long-range thinkers such as James Steinberg, deputy national security adviser. But last week saw the crucial first step, an enlarged Nato that comes with Russian acquiescence and with a Russian commitment to co-operate in the talks about what Nato could and should become.

This first stage must be sold to the US Senate, which must ratify the new Nato treaty, to Nato's existing allies, to the media, to the bureaucracy and to the wider public. The preliminary lobbying has been astute. Henry Kissinger, a former critic, has been persuaded to back the plan when the new treaty goes before the US Senate for ratification, as has the former Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole.

On the day that Nato's secretary-general reached the deal with the Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov, there were presidential statements and off-the-record briefings, and this time the New York Times got it right. The front page splash read "Russia Agrees to Nato Plan Pushed By Clinton to Admit Nations From Eastern Bloc".

But, in a deeper sense, the media again got it wrong. Not that they misinterpreted the letter of the agreement for a new Founding Act in which Russia and Nato will regularly consult; it is the spirit of the event that is being missed. The real point is that the old cold war rhetoric has been superseded. This is not just about creating a new buffer zone to the east of Germany, nor about stabilising that cauldron zone between Slavs and Teutons where so many wars have been brewed.

"All of us are trying to change not only the facts on the ground, but the whole pattern of thought that has dominated the international politics of Europe for 50 years," Clinton said, trying to explain how he wanted to go beyond the old game of nations and the overarmed minuets of the great powers.

"Even though the cold war is over, a lot of people want to go back to the kind of analysis that was more typical even before the second world war, in the late 19th and 20th century," he went on. "The 21st century does not have to be trapped in the same assessments of advantage and loss that brought death and destruction and heartbreak to so many for so long in the 20th century."

The cautions voiced in the media commentaries about "a new frontier in Europe" are beside the point. There is no lasting new division between Nato and potential foes; there is instead an unfolding embrace, a creeping absorption whose ultimate goal is to bring a democratic Russia definitively into the Western camp.

"By expanding Nato but linking Russia to it, we aim to avoid the errors made at the end of World War One and Two: not punitive like [the treaty of] Versailles, not permissive like Yalta," says deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott, Clinton's old Oxford roommate, who has done most of the cajoling of the Russians in two years of personal diplomacy.

A curious feature of the diplomacy has been that, hard as the Russians bargained, the Clinton team had an even tougher job persuading the US foreign policy establishment that Nato expansion made sense. George F Kennan, who crafted the strategy of "containment" of the Soviet Union in 1946, spoke for many when he argued that it would be "the most fateful error of American policy in the whole cold war era".

There was, at least initially, considerable doubt in the State Department, the CIA, and in the Pentagon, where General John Shalikashvili initially wanted to stick with the halfway house he had devised, that of a Partnership for Peace that fell significantly short of giving full Nato membership to the eastern Europeans.

Most of this was bulldozed aside by Richard Holbrooke, better known for his work on the Bosnian peace settlement at Dayton. Holbrooke, as assistant secretary of state, ran the inter-agency policy group that finally herded the rest of the Washington bureaucracy into line.

Still, the grand panjandrums of the Council on Foreign Relations have been talked round. Vaclav Havel visited the US to add his moral weight to Clinton's scheme. Polish and other ethnic Americans have been asked to redouble their own formidable lobbying efforts. Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland has been telling how her loyal Democratic and Polish-American parents turned the portrait of Franklin Roosevelt to the wall after the Yalta deal left Poland at the Soviet Union's mercy in 1945, saying she would not now be doing the same with Clinton's photo.

Britain's initial doubts, as a country that learned in 1939 the difference between giving Poland a military guarantee and making it stick, have been put to rest. We were told that the alternative to Nato enlargement was Nato's withering, with America's presence in Europe declining accordingly.

All that is the hard politics of this agreement. But consider again Clinton's words about changing "the pattern of thought" of the way the European tribes have traditionally made ours the bloodiest, most ruthless of continents. This is the classic voice of American idealism, an echo of Woodrow Wilson's hope of "a war to end wars", and of Roosevelt's 1945 call to the grand alliance of the second world war to remember that "the real enemy is war itself".

Canada's grizzlies are unbearable at poll time

COMMENT
Leslie Plommer

IS GLOOM genetically imprinted in Canadians? It is a relevant question as general election day approaches in the land of plenty that contentment forgot, for what other explanation can there be for the ceaseless grizzling that is just more clamorous at poll time?

Historians of the "frontier theory" school would likely answer, Yes: as with the United States, this vast entity is still captive to the mentality of the settlers who stitched it into statehood. Modern Canada, by this interpretation, is largely peopled not just by the direct descendants of the best and the brightest escaping the Old World but also by the worst malcontents and materialists.

Canada's collective misery-guts propensity makes this an electorate more than usually susceptible to political tub-thumpers with the Big Answer. Combine that with the regionalism that confederation never really superseded and the contemporary fashion for devolution, and you have a country poised to hold its last election as a unitary state.

Canada is already one of the West's most highly devolved countries, with powerful provinces receiving a share of federal revenues and raising their own taxes to run education, medicare, social services, transport and so on. Somehow, to a perennially unhappy people, it does not seem enough.

In the June 2 poll, the three main parties are all running roughly in the ideological centre, with the ruling Liberals, a strong traditional refuge for the average voter, likely to hold on to government *faute de mieux*. But the other two barely count in Ottawa — the New Democratic Party, social democrats who are federally marginal, and the Progressive Conservatives, occasionally mighty but swept from national government in 1993 in a poll that reduced them to a risible two seats.

Both are outranked in parliament by newcomers. The rightwing Reform Party lives in the far west. It is against big government and high taxes, and unrestricted immigration, but is for tough action on crime.

The Bloc Québécois, which wants some autonomy for French Canada, lives in the east. Quebec is a province that has long felt neglected by Ottawa, although the consensus among economists is that these days the province takes more money out of confederation than it puts in. Mood rather than money is in the ascendant, however, and a successful Quebec referendum on "sovereignty" is just a matter of time.

The west has always been a spawning ground for populist parties inveighing against dominance and neglect by Ottawa and the east — socialists, bible-belting fundamentalists, or weird *mélanges* of both.

But there is little doubt that the steady rise of secessionism in Quebec has helped fuel the reaction that the Reform Party exemplifies.

Thus the decline of the pro-federalist mentality stretches far outside Quebec and, excepting the Maritimes, right through an English Canada for which "one nation" used to be sacred. From Ontario westward, three decades of listening to Quebec's rising "demands" has produced a war-weariness. Polls taken since Quebec's 1995 referendum on autonomy find that attitudes in the rest of the country have hardened towards Quebec and to what the others are willing to offer to keep the province in the confederation.

More than half of Canadians now oppose constitutional recognition of the "distinct nature" of the province, a fundamental Quebec requirement.

Among significant numbers of Anglos, the sentiment towards the Québécois is: if you want to go, go.

Only now are the reigning Liberals formulating a choice for Quebec: in or out, all or nothing, or some form of association, and on what terms? Even here, they are not making the tough political choices, but asking the supreme court to do the job. Equally, Quebec's secessionist leaders are ditching "separatism" in favour of foggy "sovereigntism".

So when the Québécois face their next autonomy referendum they will, on past form, be egged on by the grievance-merchants inside and outside their province, but be as much in the dark as they were in 1995 about what exactly they are endorsing. Will they, and the rest of Canada, live happily ever after? Are you kidding?

Kinshasa holds key to peace in Africa

COMMENT
Patrick Smith

"THE SHAPE of Africa resembles a revolver," wrote Franz Fanon, "and Zaire is the trigger." More than 30 years after Fanon's assessment, new fingers are on the trigger, but the analogy holds true. The future of Zaire is the most important question for the continent since the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Twice the size of France and Germany combined — and boasting nine neighbours — Zaire is Africa's third-largest state. An effective government in Kinshasa could help rebuild the national and regional economy. It is also the key to resolving conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi and Angola and could help stabilise the shaky governments across Africa's midriff. Conversely, continuing economic decay and dictatorship would open the region's frail state system to more conflict and instability, fanning the flames of rebellion across the Zaire river through Congo-Brazzaville up to West Africa.

On balance, the future for Zaire and the region is brighter than it has been for three decades. The end of Mobutuism closes the curtain on a psychological and physical blight on Africa, all the better because it resulted from African endeavour and was not puppeteered by the West. Yet the atrocities meted out to Rwandan refugees and to Zaireans in the east signal weakness and malevolence in Laurent Kabila's alliance and reflect the regional roots of its spectacular military success.

Ugandan, Rwandan and Angolan soldiers in Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire scarcely bothered to hide their military superiority. This worries some governments. The combined African fighting force under Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Rwanda's General Paul Kagame and Angola's chief of staff, General João de Matos, is a formidable military machine that, after its success in Zaire, might try its strength elsewhere.

Museveni leads — but does not dominate — the powerful coalition of African leaders behind Kabila, a group of exceptionally strong-willed individuals instinctively disinclined to do anyone else's bidding. The mutuality of interests is striking: Kigali and Kampala gain from the dismemberment of the Interahamwe camps on the Zaire border. Luanda gains from the dispersal of Unita's bases in Zaire.

The coalition includes Kagame, Eritrea's Issayas Aferworki, Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi, Angola's President José Eduardo dos Santos and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang. Many first met in the 1970s in Tanzania under the auspices of former President Julius Nyerere and his political circle.

Two recurring themes dominated debates: the liberation of South Africa and Zaire, and how this could unlock Africa's development. South Africa's technological strengths combined with Zaire's mineral wealth, enormous hydropower potential to produce the cheapest electricity in the world and agricultural resources, could fire the continent's great leap forward.

South Africa's intervention in Zaire was its most ambitious diplomatic foray yet, but in formal diplomatic terms achieved little beyond providing a ship and Nelson Mandela as a moral beacon. But South Africa has much to gain from change in Zaire, with plans to harness the power of the Inga dam to a pan-African electricity grid; its mining companies are well placed to extract and process Zaire's minerals.

If the coalition behind Kabila gains from his successes, other powers — notably the authoritarian regimes in Kenya, Nigeria and Sudan — are losing.

Long-time Mobutu ally President Daniel arap Moi appears isolated, discredited by failed mediation attempts and his government's protection of Interahamwe militias.

The war against Hassan el Turabi's National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum, waged by Sudan Alliance Forces and the SPLA (helped by Asmara, Addis Ababa and Kampala), follows the coalition pattern.

Further south, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe does not hide either his distaste for Turabi's regime or his support for the SPLA. Military hardware moves north from South Africa through Zimbabwe to Uganda and beyond. Garang and Mandela met in the Transkei in December, although Pretoria is publicly neutral in the Sudan conflict.

Recently tempers flared between Khartoum and Pretoria over the infiltration of Islamic militants. After Mobutu, Turabi's regime will become the most reviled in all of Africa.

Not far behind is General Sani Abacha's regime in Nigeria. The general's affinity for Mobutu, Moi and Turabi is evident from the frequent announcements of solidarity against "imperialist interference" and continuing assurance of mutual diplomatic support.

Abacha encouraged Mobutu's Francophone friends, notably Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema, to host a summit using the Organisation of African Unity to halt the Kabila rebellion. But the summit failed miserably. Tensions persist between Abuja and Pretoria. Abacha still smarts from Mandela's calls for his overthrow, following the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa in November 1995.

On Zaire and other issues Nigeria, Sudan and Kenya share common cause with Mobutu's Francophone allies: especially France's President Jacques Chirac. For France, the Zaire conflict was an unmitigated disaster. Paris fatally underestimated the potential of the 1994 Rwanda war to change Central Africa for ever.

The overthrow of Mobutu was overwhelmingly organised and achieved by a coalition of Africans not given to taking orders from outside. The central issue now is about how the new government in Kinshasa can establish an effective central authority and governing class to rebuild the economy while ceding enough local control to maintain the support of Zaire's diverse peoples and their neighbours. — *Observer*

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 16

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The Week In Britain James Lewis

Utilities wince as Brown plans to squeeze profits

A LEGAL CHALLENGE could be mounted by British Telecom, and possibly by the British Airports Authority, to the Government's plan to impose a "windfall" levy on the privatised utilities in order to raise £5 billion to pay for getting 250,000 young and long-term unemployed people back into jobs.

The scheme by Chancellor Gordon Brown to tax the "windfall profits" of the utilities was announced well ahead of the election. But he has not said which companies will be on his hit-list. There is also uncertainty about how much is to be raised: Mr Brown says he needs "at least" £3 billion, but analysts expect the levy to be nearer £5 billion.

Neither BT nor the BAA thought they would be targeted, and Mr Brown's precise proposals will not be known until his first budget, expected to be on June 10. BT has put a lot of effort into building a working relationship with Labour, and its chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, who voted Labour at the election, said he would not have done so had his company been named in the manifesto.

"We are not a monopoly, we are not a utility, and we pay substantial corporation tax," said Sir Iain. "To line up BT with the monopoly utilities to be punished with a windfall levy would be quite perverse." The company would not, however, refuse to cooperate in other areas with Labour. For example, it has already promised to link every school to the Internet free of charge.

Mr Brown's legal advisers told him that any challenge to his proposals, in the British or European courts, would be likely to fail. Other lawyers believe that a challenge might succeed in Europe, where it could be argued that a tax imposed on BT would amount to an illegal subsidy to its main rival, Mercury.

THE LAW on surrogate motherhood is to be reviewed by the Government in the wake of a fiasco involving Karen Roche, a Yorkshire maternity nurse, who agreed to bear a child for an infertile Dutch couple, Clemens and Sonja Peters. She then lied that she had aborted their child, but later admitted that she was still pregnant and intended to bring the baby up as her own.

Ms Roche said she did not believe the Dutch couple were committed to the child, and that they had not shown her evidence that they had enough money to pay her the agreed £13,000 in expenses. Under the law as it stands, it is illegal for agencies or individuals to be paid for assisting surrogacy, and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority suggested that £13,000 was rather more than "reasonable expenses".

In another case, a lesbian couple who had artificially inseminated themselves using a syringe and a pickle jar were pressed by the Child Support Agency (CSA) to name their two sperm donors. The agency wants to track down the two men and demand that they pay child maintenance to Dawn and Lisa Whitley, of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

The CSA is prevented by law from pursuing the fathers of children produced by sperm donated through official fertilisation clinics, but it is free to pursue the fathers of those produced by any other means. The lesbian couple could face a 40 per cent cut in benefits unless they help to identify the fathers.

THE National Lottery is to give the British film industry a £92.25 million boost following the award of three film franchises, in conjunction with the Arts Council, to Pathé Pictures, DNA Film Ltd, and The Film Consortium. Under the terms of the franchise all profits must be put back into British film-making.

In a separate scheme urban parks, many of which have fallen into dilapidation as a result of local authority cutbacks, received grants totalling £57 million from the Lottery to rescue 48 of them throughout the country. Another 100 parks are seeking grants totalling £225 million.

WORKERS who were sacked from the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) celebrated the end of a 13-year struggle to restore trade unions at the sensitive intelligence-gathering centre in Cheltenham after the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, announced that he had decided to "right a long-standing wrong".

A group of 14 scientists, linguists, computer programmers and code-breakers were sacked when Margaret (now Baroness) Thatcher banned union membership at GCHQ because of a "conflict between the structure of trade unions and loyalty to the state". Those below retirement age will be reinstated.

AN INVESTIGATION was ordered by Home Secretary Jack Straw, into the sale of "alcopops", alcoholic "soft" drinks that are up to 5 per cent proof and which, critics claim, are cynically packaged to appeal to under-age drinkers.

Mr Straw acted when a 14-year-old boy was convicted of breaking into a school and setting fire to it, causing £750,000 of damage, after drinking alcoholic lemonade and cider. Judge Peter Larkin said at Bolton Crown Court that it was "grossly irresponsible of drinks companies to dress alcohol up as soft drinks".

Austin

LAY OFF OR WE CHANGE THE PHONE NUMBERS AGAIN

A WELL WISHER



A boy stands inside the limestone footprint of diplodocus PHOTOGRAPH: LEIGH GREEN

Huge dinosaur footprints found

Geoffrey Gibbs

THE biggest series of dinosaur footprints ever discovered in the UK could have ended up in a garden rockery but for a Dorset quarryman.

The footprints — identified as those of a huge sauropod dinosaur such as brachiosaurus or diplodocus that lived 140 million years ago — were described last week as a find of international significance. It is hoped to preserve them where they are as a visitor attraction.

Excavation is continuing the find at the Worth Matravers quarry, near Corfe Castle, in the expectation of uncovering more evidence of the four-footed vegetarians, which weighed up to 80 tonnes and could feed from treetops nine metres high.

Experts hope to discover trackways consisting of at least three consecutive footprints to help them determine how fast the animals moved.

Jo Wright, a Bristol University palaeontologist called in to investigate the prints, said it was probably the biggest dinosaur footprint find for years.

"It is important worldwide, because the age of these rocks is unusual," she said as the media were given their first glimpse of the discovery. "There are a lot of sauropod footprints from America older or younger than these, but these are from between the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods and all over the world rocks of this age are very scarce.

"The presence of these footprints means sauropods actually lived here during this time."

She said that when sauropods roamed the earth, the area in which the prints were found would have been a sandy beach bounded by a freshwater lagoon and forests.

The prints, the largest of which is almost a metre across, were found on National Trust land close to the Priests Way footpath in south Dorset by Kevin Keates, who has been quarrying in the area for more than 50 years. He has often found small fossils and prints while extracting Purbeck limestone, but said he had never come across anything on this scale. "If I hadn't noticed the dents, somebody could well have had diplodocus footprints in their rockery," he admitted.

The prints, 52 in all, were uncovered in a natural seam in the rock and saved from damage as the quarriers had been using a rubber-tyred digger rather than a tracked vehicle. A track left by the tail of one of the huge leaf-eating animals can also clearly be seen.

Dr Wright said that, although a lot of small bones had been found in the Purbeck rock, it was unlikely that sauropod bones would be discovered.



Diplodocus, whose footprints were found in sand in Dorset

Rescued women tell of polar ordeal

Kate Watson-Smyth and Sue Quinn

FOUR British women plucked to safety from a drifting ice pack during an expedition to the North Pole described their "hellish" ordeal in -40C temperatures and said they had only a few pieces of chocolate left on which to survive when they were rescued.

The women, part of a five-team relay effort to be the first all-female group to reach the North Pole, had run out of fuel and were surrounded by steadily cracking ice when a plane, sent out to drop off supplies, managed to land and pick them up.

Rosie Clayton-Sancer, aged 37, the Queen Mother's great niece, Andre Chadwick, 32, Sarah Jones, 28, both teachers, and Juliette May, 33, a business development executive, were the fourth of the five teams taking part in the McVitie's Penguin Polar Relay.

Speaking from base camp in the Canadian North West Territories after the rescue, Mrs Clayton-Sancer said her team got into difficulties when thick fog and sub-zero temperatures prevented a plane from picking them up when they had completed their leg of the relay.

"We were stuck in our tent on driving ice," she said. "We were on half rations and then no rations, just bits of chocolate, and no fuel.

"We couldn't heat the tents. There was moving ice all around. It was a race against time." Even when conditions improved, they were unable to radio for a plane.

"When I first saw the plane I couldn't believe it was there. Then I held back, for fear it wouldn't land and would go away," she said. "When we took off, I felt choked. I felt it was such an extraordinary experience, and almost nervous to be going back to the cluttered world of before."

The rescue plane finally managed to land the fifth team, which must now cover the last 110 nautical miles to the pole before early June, when the thaw starts.

Channel tunnel fire caused by 'arson'

Keith Harper

ARSON is expected to be confirmed as the probable cause of the Channel tunnel fire, which resulted in more than $300 million damage last year.

The official French judicial inquiry into the blaze, which broke out on an HGV shuttle on November 18, reports this week. It is expected to say the evidence shows that a deliberate act of sabotage led to the fire. The revelation is likely to lead to renewed police efforts on both sides of the Channel to identify the culprits.

Once the inquiry ruled out faulty equipment, it had only to decide whether the fire was accidental or started deliberately. After cross-examining witnesses, the inquiry has ruled that arson was the most likely cause.

Flames leapt more than 2m into the air as the train neared the deep cutting at the start of the tunnel, and the accompanying smoke plume startled French security guards. But they were too late to stop the shuttle entering the tunnel.

From the outset, arson has been deemed the likeliest cause. It is thought the inquiry will not be able to name any culprit, but suspicions must rest on French lorry drivers involved in a bitter labour dispute in Calais at the time.

David Shaw, the former Tory MP for Dover, said he had been told that a disgruntled French lorry driver had started the fire. But Eurotunnel also had labour problems with some of its French train crew and there were delays on trains that night because of an unofficial dispute.

Meanwhile Eurotunnel last week ignored pressure from the British government, fire officers and the inquiry into the Channel tunnel blaze and refused to replace the open-sided freight wagons through which the fire raged. The report into the cause of the fire stops short of suggesting that the wagons be scrapped, but attacks "fundamental weaknesses" in the safety system and inadequately trained staff.

But the chairman of the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, Roderick Allison, said he would welcome a decision by Eurotunnel to phase out the wagons "with open arms".

The deputy prime minister, John Prescott, added his doubts about the design of the wagons. "Safety must be paramount," he said.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU), which has constantly opposed the open lattice wagons, is to seek an urgent meeting with Mr Prescott and the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. It has said the wagons should be banned from the tunnel.

But Eurotunnel, which reported that 486,359 passengers had used the tunnel last month, rejected suggestions that the design be changed. The freight shuttles are 800 metres long and it has just ordered two more at a cost of $210 million to meet growing demand.

The company is still waiting for clearance from the British and French governments, but plans to resume the HGV services next month, and is offering free trials to customers before the end of May.

Mr Allison, whose committee includes fire and safety experts, denied that its decision was due to commercial pressures from Eurotunnel. He said there were always possible improvements and if the company came forward with proposals to enclose the shuttles they would be welcomed. The open-sided shuttles would be phased out "when they reach the end of their useful life".

Fathers get blame for sons' failings

John Carvel

FATHERS' failure to read enough to their young sons has been blamed for educational under-achievement by boys at every stage of their academic development.

Ted Wragg, professor of education at Exeter university, produced research showing that three-quarters of children aged five to seven were read to regularly by their mothers, but only half by their fathers. During the later years of primary school, half the children said they were read to by their mothers and only a quarter by their fathers.

"Boys need role models in this as in everything else. Part of the problem is that too many boys see reading as a female activity and shy away from it." Almost all infant schoolteachers and classroom assistants were women.

"Boys need men reading to them from an early age, and helping them learn to read, so they grow up seeing reading as a legitimate male activity", Professor Wragg told education experts in London.

The result of children's early reading experiences was a growing gender gap as girls forged ahead at every age. On average they scored about 5 per cent more than boys in reading tests at the start of primary school, got consistently better marks at GCSE and achieved disproportionate success in reaching university.

"Boys start down, and stay down," Professor Wragg said. In 1983/84 girls had a 1 per cent advantage in the proportion getting five good grades at GCSE, but by 1995/96 the gap rose to almost 10 per cent. Nearly two-thirds of the girls were getting a good GCSE grade in English, compared with less than half the boys. "We are faced with the mass under-achievement of nearly half our population."

Thousands of boys were heading for the scrap heap with the disappearance of manual jobs needing muscle power. "Employers say boys are virtually unemployable. Who wants a truculent, spotty 16-year-old in a 21st century job? . . . The entrance fee to society has gone up substantially."

Professor Wragg's research for the Leverhulme project on primary school improvement showed boys' reading scores improved sharply once fathers, uncles or older brothers began reading to them.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

In Brief

THE Government received a boost last week when its first set of jobless figures stifled demands for higher base rates by delivering a combination of rapidly declining unemployment and a surprise easing of wages pressure.

GENISTA McIntosh, the chief executive appointed to steer the Royal Opera House through closure to allow building work at Covent Garden, has been replaced after just four months because of "ill health". Arts, page 26

THE chief constable of West Yorkshire blamed a gang of young drug dealers in Leeds for a succession of riots which saw officers pelted with petrol bombs and bricks.

THE Conservative club in Huntingdon, John Major's constituency, is closing down for lack of support.

THE Court of Appeal has deprived the Guardian and Granada Television of a jury in the libel action brought against them by the former MP and cabinet minister, Jonathan Aitken. The trial, due to start on June 4, will be heard alone by Mr Justice Popplewell.

FREDERICK Heyworth, who murdered his four young nephews and nieces by setting fire to their house because he hated their mother for helping his estranged wife, has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

NIGEL Benn, former holder of two world boxing titles, has been cleared of attacking businessman Ray Sullivan.

THE Security Service MI5 is to advertise for spies. There will be a telephone number for informants, a site on the Internet and the release of documents about the agency's early exploits.

MALCOLM Jones, a 22-year-old student at Manchester Metropolitan University, hanged himself after Barclays threatened him with debt collectors. Mr Jones owed the bank £728.

HUMAN rights organisations protested after two British nurses accused of murdering a colleague in Saudi Arabia made their first court appearance in handcuffs and leg shackles.

NUISANCE the seal, found swimming around a reservoir at the Dungeness B nuclear power station in Kent, was rescued after nine days.

MOLLY Maxwell, aged 104, has finally been given the Cambridge degree she earned 80 years ago. In 1917 women were not allowed to receive degrees.

Police to probe MP bribe claim

Ewen MacAskill

TONY Blair was confronted with the first serious test of his premiership last Sunday when police launched an inquiry into an allegation of bribery by one of his MPs, Mohammed Sarwar.

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, asked them to mount the investigation after the MP for Glasgow Govan was alleged to have offered an election opponent "compensation" to run a losing campaign and help discredit a political opponent. A carrier bag containing £5,000 was said to have been handed over to Badar Islam, an Independent Labour candidate.

Mr Sarwar, aged 44, Britain's first Muslim MP, who was elected after a dirty battle with the Scottish National Party, denied the allegations and on Monday announced he would be suing the News of the World, which first published the allegations, for libel. He later admitted giving Mr Islam money but insisted that it was in the form of a loan and was handed over after the election.

However, a second candidate in the Govan election came forward last Sunday night also claiming Mr Sarwar's aides had tried to bribe him. Peter Paton, aged 43, who won 325 votes as an unofficial Labour candidate, revealed he had already lodged a complaint with Strathclyde police.

The prospect of scandal threatened a swift end to the euphoria that has surrounded Mr Blair since the election. Labour was underlining the contrast between Mr Dewar's action in going to the police and the vacillation of the previous Conservative regime when faced with similar allegations.

If the police decide to charge Mr Sarwar, he is almost certain to be expelled from the party. If convicted, he would be thrown out of the Commons.

Mr Blair, having been informed last Saturday that the story was about to break, told his Chief Whip, Nick Brown, to take "prompt action". Mr Brown called Mr Sarwar to his office at 12 Downing Street last Sunday, and after a 20-minute meeting Mr Brown said there would be no immediate disciplinary action.

The News of the World alleged that Mr Sarwar paid £5,000 to Mr Islam after he eased off his campaigning to avoid splitting the Asian vote. The paper claimed Mr Sarwar, when paying the money at a meeting after the election, also tried to persuade Mr Islam to sign an affidavit about another defeated candidate who had complained to the police about alleged electoral irregularities.

Although the police would have been involved in any investigation, Mr Dewar called Scotland's highest law officer, Andrew Hardie, the Lord Advocate, to get the process under way.


Accused MP Mohammed Sarwar in London last Sunday

Mr Dewar said: "I have spoken to the Lord Advocate and he instructed an immediate and rigorous investigation by the Crown Office."

Labour won the Govan seat by more than 2,914 votes over the Scottish National Party, whose leader, Alex Salmond, provided an early taste of the criticism Mr Blair will face: "In the last Parliament, he gave a strong line about financial sleaze because of Major's prevarication. I would expect Blair to take the same attitude towards his own party."

Howard is a coward, says Widdecombe

Michael White

ANN Widdecombe, the former prisons minister, this week delivered a stinging blow to the Tory leadership hopes of her old boss, Michael Howard, when she made a Commons statement on the sacking of Derek Lewis as head of the prison service.

In the most savage parliamentary attack on a Tory colleague since Sir Geoffrey Howe's fatal assault seven years ago on Margaret Thatcher, Ms Widdecombe accused Mr Howard of misleading the House over the departure in 1995 of Mr Lewis, and the earlier suspension of Parkhurst governor John Marriott.

During a bitter 35-minute indictment on Monday, she belittled Mr Howard's personal honour and political courage.

Mr Howard brushed aside Ms Widdecombe's accusations when he summed up the Commons debate later. A formidable political fighter, he turned his defence into a showcase for his claims to become the next Tory leader.

"At no time did I cross the line between what I was entitled to do and what I was not," he insisted as Ms Widdecombe protested that he had not addressed her concerns.

As some Tory MPs rallied to Mr Howard, his first response was to back Ms Widdecombe's call for Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to publish the full transcript of the key 1995 meeting with Mr Lewis.

But a transcript of the meeting, released later, indicated that Mr Howard had put Mr Lewis under pressure to remove Mr Marriott after the break-out of three Category A prisoners in January 1995. Mr Howard, who denies interfering in operational matters, told Mr Lewis: "John Marriott cannot continue as governor. It is inconceivable that disciplinary charges won't follow. I can't conceive of a clearer case for suspension."

Ms Widdecombe told MPs there was "ample documentary evidence that Mr Howard did indeed personally tell Mr Lewis that the governor should be suspended". Far from his subsequent claim to the Commons that "there was no question of overruling" Mr Lewis, Mr Howard had taken legal advice to see if he could.

When the Learmont report into the Whitemoor and Parkhurst escapes criticised the Prison Service in October 1995, Mr Lewis had been sacked, despite, said Ms Widdecombe, the report's evident "serious flaws". Mr Lewis received £220,000 for wrongful dismissal.

Tough targets set on leaks

THE water companies are to be set tougher, mandatory targets for reducing leaks and will be told to provide free repairs for customers, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, announced at an industry summit on Monday.

Signalling closer, political, regulation, the Government's environment team unveiled a 10-point plan to prevent future shortages and encourage the public to save water.

While Mr Prescott promised the one-day Water Summit in London that he would avoid the usual comments about "fat cat salaries", he gave a three-week deadline for responding to its plans, which left the industry in no doubt about the urgency Labour attaches to the changes. Shares in water companies slipped by more than 10p on the expectation that the utilities would have to spend more on repairing underground leaks.

Irish MPs stage protest

GERRY Adams and Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein MPs for West Belfast and Mid-Ulster, arrived at the Commons on Monday to demand their MP's passes, in an effort to highlight their being banned from Parliament, *writes Ewen MacAskill.*

The Speaker Betty Boothroyd last week changed the parliamentary rules to ensure that the pair did not have access to Commons facilities or have the general run of Parliament. They are barred because they refuse to swear the oath of allegiance to the Queen required of MPs.

But the ruling did not come into effect until Tuesday evening and so the Sinn Fein representatives made the most of their Commons passes. Mr Adams, standing in the Central Lobby, denounced the Speaker's ruling as discriminatory and arrogant. "The Speaker might not like our politics but people voted for us. Would it not have been better to have let us come here and build up a network, rather than this arbitrary exclusion?"

As they walked through the Commons, accompanied by Labour MP Tony Benn, they passed a plaque to Airey Neave, the minister killed in 1979 by a car bomb by the republican splinter group, INLA.

The reaction of MPs to the visit was mixed. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, dismissed it as a stunt, but some Labour MPs argued Miss Boothroyd had made a mistake in changing the rules to bar them. Others, especially Conservatives, were angry that they were present at all. Tory MP Nigel Evans had a tense exchange with Mr McGuinness in the Members' Lobby.

The two men spent five hours in the Commons but failed to persuade officials that the Speaker's ban should be lifted. Officials confirmed only one concession, that the two MPs can use Commons stationery for dealing with constituents' problems.

Code breakers reported the slaughter of Jews in 1941

Richard Norton-Taylor

BRITISH code breakers were providing Churchill's wartime government with daily accounts of the systematic killing of Jews as early as the summer of 1941, well before Hitler formally declared the "final solution", according to secret documents released this week by GCHQ.

The first authoritative evidence of the mass execution of Jews is contained in reports of German police messages intercepted by the Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS) at Bletchley Park — the forerunner of GCHQ — sent to Churchill and a select group of intelligence officers.

They reveal a relentless pattern of atrocities — often referred to euphemistically as "cleaning up operations" and "gas cleansing stations" — as the German Ordnungspolizei and SS battalions liquidated tens of thousands of Jews on the eastern front.

A report in July 1941 referred to the shooting in one day of 1,153 Jews in Russia. A month later, the SS cavalry was reported to have "liquidated 3,274 partisans and Jewish Bolsheviks".

Another intercepted SS message read: "The figure of executions in my area now exceeds the 30,000 mark."

The intercepts, marked Most Secret: To Be Kept Under Lock and Key, were released at the Public Record Office six months after similar reports — some of which originated in Britain — were opened at the United States archives in Washington under the Freedom of Information Act.

Despite the sheer quantity of evidence of atrocities against the Jews, Britain could do little about it. "It was a double tragedy," David Cesarani, the respected Jewish historian, said.

"The Allies could not reveal their knowledge because it would have betrayed the code-breaking, and it was at the nadir of Allied power."

The intercepts contain daily reports from 1942 of the number of people held, and the number who died in concentration camps.

Many of the reports were used as evidence at the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Education the key to create a fairer society

This is an edited version of the Queen's Speech last week, in which Labour outlined its programme for the next 18 months

MY GOVERNMENT intends to govern for the benefit of the whole nation.

The education of young people will be my government's first priority. They will work to raise standards in schools, colleges and universities and to promote lifelong learning at the workplace. They will cut class sizes, using money saved as a result of legislation phasing out the assisted places scheme.

A further bill will contain measures to raise educational standards, develop a new role for local education authorities and parents, establish a new framework for the decentralised and equitable organisation of schools, propose reforms to the teaching profession, and respond positively to recommendations from the National Committee of Inquiry into the future of higher education.

The central economic objectives of my government are high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, to be achieved by ensuring opportunity for all. The essential platform for achieving these objectives is economic stability.

To that end a bill will be introduced to give the Bank of England operational responsibility for setting interest rates, in order to deliver price stability and support the Government's overall economic policy, within a framework of enhanced accountability. My government will also ensure public borrowing is controlled through tough fiscal rules and that the burden of public debt is kept at a stable and prudent level.

They will aim to deliver high and sustainable levels of growth and employment by encouraging investment in industry, skills, infrastructure and new technologies; by reducing long-term unemployment, especially among young people; by promoting competition; and by helping to create successful and profitable business.

My government has pledged to mount a fundamental attack upon youth and long-term unemployment and will take early steps to implement a welfare-to-work programme to tackle unemployment, financed by a levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities which will be brought forward in an early Budget. A new partnership with business will be at the heart of my government's plans to build a modern and dynamic economy to improve the competitiveness of British industry. They will bring forward legislation to reform and strengthen competition law and introduce a statutory right to interest on late payment of debts.

My government is committed to fairness at work and will introduce a national minimum wage.

Legislation will be brought forward to amend criminal law and to combat crime, including reform of the youth justice system and measures against anti-social behaviour. A bill will be introduced to prohibit the private possession of handguns.

My government will improve the National Health Service, as a service providing care on the basis of need to the whole population.

They will bring forward new arrangements for decentralisation and co-operation within the service and for ending the internal market.


Queen Elizabeth addresses MPs at Westminster

Legislation will be introduced to clarify the existing powers of NHS trusts to enter into partnerships with the private sector. A white paper will be published on measures to reduce tobacco consumption, including legislation to ban tobacco advertising.

My government will contribute to the achievement of high standards of food safety and protection of public health throughout the food chain, will ensure openness and transparency of information to consumers, and will consult widely on recommendations for a Food Standards Agency.

A bill will be introduced to ensure that as many people as possible have access to the benefits of the National Lottery, including for health and education projects.

Measures will be introduced to enable capital receipts from the sale of council houses to be invested in housebuilding and renovation as part of my government's determination to deal with homelessness and unemployment. My government is committed to open and transparent government. They will introduce a bill to strengthen data protection controls.

They will enhance people's aspirations for better, more accessible and accountable public services, using information technology to the full. A white paper will be published on proposals for a Freedom of Information Bill.

A bill will be introduced to incorporate into United Kingdom law the main provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Decentralisation is essential to my government's vision of a modern nation. Legislation will be introduced to allow the people of Scotland and Wales to vote in referendums on my government's proposals for a devolved Scottish Parliament and the establishment of a Welsh Assembly.

If these proposals are approved in the referendums, my government will bring forward legislation to implement them. Legislation will be introduced to provide for a referendum on a directly elected strategic authority and a directly elected mayor for London. A bill will be brought forward to establish regional development agencies in England outside London.

In Northern Ireland, my government will seek reconciliation and a political settlement which has broad support, working in co-operation with the Irish government. They will work to build trust and confidence in Northern Ireland by bringing forward legislation to deal with terrorism and to reduce tension over parades, and other measures to protect human rights, combat discrimination in the workplace, increase confidence in policing and foster economic development.

In the European Union, my government will take a leading role. They will seek to promote employment, improve competitiveness, complete the single market and opt into the Social Chapter.

They will seek further reform of the common agricultural policy to secure lower food prices for consumers and save money, support the rural economy and enhance the environment. They will seek changes to the common fisheries policy to conserve fish stocks in the long-term interest of the UK fishing industry. They will play a full part in the debate about economic and monetary union.

My government will ensure a strong defence, based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and promote international peace and security. They will play a major role in decisions to shape Nato's future, including enlargement, and to include Russia in a wider security framework.

My government will work for reforms to make the United Nations more effective and for an early resolution of its funding crisis.

My government will work on behalf of Hong Kong's people to achieve a successful transition which preserves their way of life and promotes their continued stability and prosperity.

Preparations will continue for the G7 Summit to be held in Birmingham and the second Asia-Europe meeting in London in 1998. My government will host the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in October 1997 and seize the opportunity to increase co-operation between the United Kingdom and other members of the Commonwealth.

My government has established a Department for International Development. They will publish a White Paper setting out how, through more coherent policies, they will tackle global poverty and promote sustainable development. They will rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

My government will promote open markets around the world, while ensuring that the interests of developing countries and the global environment are fairly reflected.

The promotion of human rights worldwide will be a priority, as will the fight against terrorism, organised crime, money laundering and drug misuse and trafficking at home and abroad.

My government will seek to restore confidence in the integrity of the nation's political system by upholding the highest standards of honesty and propriety in public life. They will consider how the funding of political parties should be regulated and reformed. They will programme House of Commons business to ensure more effective scrutiny of bills and better use of the time of Members of the House of Commons.

During the course of the session, my government will also publish in draft for public consultation a number of bills which it intends to introduce in subsequent sessions of this Parliament. They will propose the establishment of a new Select Committee of the House of Commons to look at ways of making parliamentary procedure more effective and efficient.

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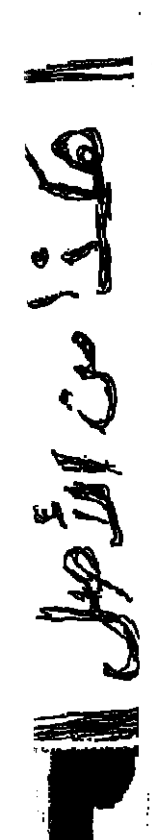
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*Source: Planned Savings, September 1996.



Rejoicing in Kinshasa

ZAIRE'S HATED regime has been swept away by "rebels" for whom the term had long become an anachronism. To the end, the lawless hangers-on of Mobutu bustled to take their booty with them into exile. Captain Mobutu Kongulu, in the worst tradition of the sons of great dictators, settled a few scores before fleeing himself. Then came the troops of the successful revolution: many of them lightly-armed teenagers, walking into victory. The events of those final hours marked the contrast between these forces all too clearly. The last-ditch attempts to finesse a negotiated deal from outside now seem at best irrelevant, at worst a continuation of the external meddling, that has had such a malign effect on Zaire for nearly 40 years. Apprehension about a final bloodbath unless such a deal were reached was unjustified: Mobutu's army crumbled or change sides too fast to give itself enough time to loot and plunder. Laurent Kabila's insistence on maintaining the advance and rejecting the negotiators' delays proved tactically correct. Now he must devise a correct strategy for the future, and there are plenty of questions to be asked about that. But there should be no doubt that his triumph is Zaire's best news in decades.

Before asking those questions, it is necessary to review these decades, and not just to assign blame to those who fostered Mobutu and then condoned his despotism, although blame is richly deserved. It is to remind ourselves that the entire fabric, political, economic and social, of Zaire — now once again the Congo — has been systematically destroyed as a result. History may conclude that the most lasting damage to Zaire was caused not by the CIA's backing for Mobutu's coups but by the willingness of the US Export-Import Bank to bankroll his grandiose economic designs. Mobutu has gone but the foreign debt still hangs around his former subjects' necks. Similarly, the outright dictatorship of Mobutu in his earlier years may have created fewer problems for today than the more subtle post-1990 machinations by him (condoned in Washington, Paris and Brussels) that subverted a formal shift to multi-party politics. The State Department last week said US relations with the new authorities depends on Mr Kabila's "commitment to democratic reforms, public accountability and respect for human rights". When did Washington lift a finger, during years of suffering by ordinary Zaireans, to demand observance of these principles by Mobutu? More to the point, Western countries should jointly sequester Mobutu's uncounted assets and assist in returning him to face charges for violation of those rights. Like so much that went wrong in the decades of cold war, Zaire's troubles cannot, must not, be shrugged aside as a Third World phenomenon.

Yet Mr Kabila must show mature political judgment for Zaire's own sake. He should heed Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, and become the main element in a "transitional authority" while setting up a broad-based administration. He inherits a fragmented scene where instant recourse to elections would be a disaster: diplomats in Kinshasa say his stated deadline of 12 months would be reasonable. It is, but he must stick to it. Replacing a dictator should not become an excuse: the Zairean people deserve much better. Mr Kabila also has to manage relations with his own external backers carefully, and avoid granting too much power to the Zairean Tutsis, who started the recent revolution. The verdict on his handling of the Rwandan refugees is still unclear. In short, Mr Kabila has much to learn and a track record that is shaky at some points and blank in others. But Zaire can at least begin to hope: that is a huge step forward.

A new opening in Belfast

IF POSITIVE gestures were enough to solve intractable problems, then after only two weeks in office Tony Blair would already have gone a long way towards unlocking the Northern Ireland situation. The Prime Minister was barely in office before he summoned the local party leaders to Downing Street, taking care to meet the most important, David Trimble, first. Then he made sure that his first international visitor was the Irish prime minister, John Bruton. And last week Mr Blair's first official journey outside London was to Northern Ireland. To cap it all he then delivered what by any standards was the most important speech on Northern Ireland for many months, in which he authorised fresh talks between the government and republicans. John Hume called it the most comprehensive speech on the subject by a British prime minister in the past 25 years. It is hard to see how Mr Blair could have done more in such a short time to show the world that Northern Ireland remains at the top of the agenda under Labour.

But gestures, although unusually important in Irish affairs, are never enough. The substance is in the policy, and the policy was set out in Belfast by Mr Blair at length and often in frank and direct language. His essential message, though, was of continuity, that what had been bravely begun under John Major in 1993 would continue. But, the speech also contained some important tactical initiatives that Mr Major would probably not have made. The most significant was in the passages that made explicit the logic of general commitment to the consent of the voters of Northern Ireland. Although all parties other than Sinn Fein are now committed to consent, few prominent protagonists before Mr Blair have been prepared to say honestly what this is likely to mean in practice. But Mr Blair did: "None of us in this hall today, even the youngest, is likely to see Northern Ireland as anything but a part of the United Kingdom." These are words nationalists generally do not like to hear, and there were other passages in the speech that seemed to indicate that Mr Blair is keen to limit Dublin's influence over the process. But these will have been reassuring to all but the most inflexibly supremacist of Ulster Unionists. They were also backed up by a stronger commitment to the Union itself than Labour politicians normally offer ("I believe in the United Kingdom. I value the Union"), and an explicit denial that Labour any longer wishes to follow a Green agenda ("My agenda is not a united Ireland").

If Mr Blair's frankness in these questions of Irish theology is to matter, much will depend upon the success of the most dramatic part of the speech, in which he authorised limited contact with Sinn Fein, irrespective of a formal ceasefire, for the purpose of establishing whether the republicans are more interested in participating in democratic politics than they now appear to be. This is a brave and welcome initiative, which presumably explains Mr Hume's enthusiasm for what was otherwise not an indulgent speech towards Irish nationalism. Sinn Fein's response to the proposal will be crucial, but Mr Blair pulled few punches in showing his contempt for the IRA's strategy, and the initial reaction from Martin McGuinness was as obdurate as ever. If the considered response is more positive, Mr Blair may be on the verge of facilitating the breakthrough Mr Major strove for but fumbled. If it is negative or, as we have come to expect, simply evasive, it is hard to be optimistic about the immediate future of Northern Ireland in spite of Mr Blair's assured debut there.

Best thing since sliced bread?

PITY Edward Montagu, first Earl of Sandwich (who fought for parliament at Marston Moor in 1644 in the civil war) and his children and grandchildren. None of them knowingly ate a sandwich: it hadn't been invented. That distinction was left to the 4th Earl, John Montagu, who put juicy slivers of English beef between slices of bread so as not to interrupt his all-night gaming sessions before returning to his day job (first Lord of the Admiralty). The beef bit of his sarney has become unpopular but the sandwich itself sweeps all before it, possibly ranking as one of the most successful British inventions. Almost half of us have one every day. The proliferation of sandwich shops has created an industry worth $3.2 billion a year, growing at nearly 10 per cent. It has been exported around the world and is taking off in France, where the market is expected to expand by 60 per cent to $180 million by 2000. The Internet is host to sandwich sites where you can exchange recipes, read poems and even order them on-line. It all sounds like a Great Unsung British Success Story.

Or did, until last week, when the Wall Street Journal claimed that "Britain's biggest contribution to gastronomy" (ouch!) has become factory-packed made with "bland bread invariably smeared with mayonnaise and filled with scant portions of what might be prawns, chicken or ham — so similar in taste they are barely distinguishable." Enough to make the fourth earl turn in his grave?

Behind the myth of the self-made man

Martin Woollacott

MARCHERS from all over Europe are heading for Amsterdam next month. The Inter-Governmental Conference, charged with weighty decisions on the reform and expansion of the European Union, will have these pilgrims on its doorstep, crying that Europe's policies are weekly and monthly increasing the continent's poverty.

Some of the British marchers are setting off from Jarrow. Hunger marchers in 1997? We are so used to the idea that Europe is still affluent, even in somewhat straitened times, that comparison with the 1930s seems far-fetched. Indeed, there is no strict comparison, because the forms of poverty have changed. If there could be, it would no doubt show that few are as badly off as many were in those days. Yet a recent survey, the first comprehensive report on European incomes, suggests that one European in six lives in a poor household. That is 57 million people, among whom impoverished workers and old people constitute a larger group than those who are poor because they have no job.

What the survey also showed is that the more generous a nation's welfare state, the fewer citizens are in poverty. Denmark has only 6 per cent in poverty, while Britain is bracketed with Greece at 22 per cent. There could be argument over the criteria used, but the broad point is clear. Those countries that have gone furthest in dismantling the welfare state, or never had much of one, have more poor people.

That so obvious a conclusion should need underlining is a sign of the times. Politicians all over Europe and North America are engaged in cutting welfare while denying that people will, in consequence, be poorer. Money will be better used, they argue. Lower social costs will mean more jobs, they say. In France and Germany, politicians on both right and left move to recognise the "advantages" of the Anglo-Saxon model of reduced welfare and deregulation which, among other things, they believe will help them achieve those elusive Maastricht convergence targets. In Italy, government and unions meet to renegotiate the welfare state, the "mother of all issues", according to the communist leader Fausto Bertinotti. In the United States, the likely result of Clinton's reforms is a downward spiral of competitive cutting of welfare costs by states.

One difficulty of discussing the welfare state is that the right, with its simplistic notion of welfare as a burden on business and competitiveness and as an institution subversive of individual self-reliance, has captured the vocabulary to the point that even politicians on the left use the same thin arithmetic and defective psychology. That partial capture of the argument has come to conceal at least three important things. One is that social costs are a process, changing over the years. The denial of this fact has enabled rightwing governments to claim they have found a solution when they are merely taking advantage of what, historically, is just a moment — that moment when the social capital created by the welfare state has not yet been wholly dissipated and the new social costs caused by the decline of welfare have not yet become huge. The social costs of both the welfare and non-welfare state are large, but the social costs of a state in transition between the two can be ignorantly or mendaciously represented as small. Small they may be, but only for a time.

The second concealment is of a straightforward seizure of assets by a business class that sees a reduced welfare state, trimmed down for profit-taking, as a highly desirable industry. Too often privatisation is seen as something governments do for ideological reasons, when it can equally well be seen as the reaction of business to the increasing difficulties of manufacturing. Factories can and do move across national boundaries, but hospitals, unemployment offices, hostels, old peoples homes and the like cannot. They belong in an unavoidably local category, along with roads, airports, and houses, and are far easier meat than the difficult businesses of making things in a global economy. What was once an infrastructure that many businessmen were happy to leave to nationalised industry while they played in the more profitable fields of manufacturing and finance has become more attractive than either.

THE THIRD concealment is the most important, and that is to deny the centrality of the welfare state to the idea of democratic citizenship. In a lecture last week in London, Ed Broadbent, the former leader of Canada's New Democratic party, offered a welcome and eloquent restatement of this principle. The welfare state, he emphasised, is not a matter of altruism or charity. It is a grand bargain that reconciles citizens to the inequalities that arise from capitalism by offering them equitable treatment in certain fundamental areas of life. As long as basic rights are assured, "the more exotic advantages of being rich will produce more indifference than resentment". It is also an attempt to reconcile two sides of human nature, or, as Broadbent puts it: "The marriage of the welfare state brings together the two dispositions of fairness and self-interest. Like all marriages, it is precarious" — and the balance between the impulse to solidarity and that to self must be constantly monitored.

The worst damage done in the years of retreat has been to upset that balance, but the most insidious has been to alter consciousness, taking advantage of the fact that the success of the welfare state had "the unintended consequence of increasing the number of working-class families open to neo-liberal arguments". Many came to believe, or half-believe, that "it was their effort alone, not the complex social and economic agenda of the welfare state that accounted for their success". Thus the now familiar spectacle of the successful man — brought up in a subsidised house, given free education and free health care, helped with the problem of caring for aged parents, aided in the purchase of a home, and assisted by public money in business or profession — coming, by a startling feat of self-deception, to see himself as a self-made man.

Le Monde

Iraq health care hit hard by UN embargo

Mouna Naïm in Baghdad

AT El Qadissiya Hospital, in the working-class Baghdad suburb of Saddam City, seven of the pediatric department's 22 incubators are only just working. Cracked and held together with sticking plaster, they offer little protection to the premature babies they contain.

Mothers with vacant faces try to beat off swarms of flies. Sitting on beds covered with sheets that are grey with age and covered with stains, they answer the doctor's questions mechanically. They all look world-weary. The room has a sweaty smell that a ventilator does little to dispel. The air-conditioning has broken down.

"We move the babies and the sick children from one ward to another depending on the time of year and the amount of sun on that part of the building," says Dr Murad Abdel Karim Kanuna, head of the department.

A boy of four who looks half his age lies on a bed. He has shrivelled skin and protruding ribs. Like several others in the hospital he is suffering from malnutrition and marasmus.

There is a shortage of antibiotics, antiseptics, children's milk, catheters, syringes, medicines and soap. The health of the Iraqi population, particularly children, is declining fast. Operations often have to be postponed for lack of anaesthetics.

Until international sanctions were imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the number of children admitted to the hospital suffering from malnutrition and retarded growth was very low; it has since risen to about four a day.

"When I see this kind of thing, I'm disgusted and afraid — it could happen to my own kids," says Dr Kanuna.

Alhane El Rached, head of the Ibn El Baladi obstetric and paediatric clinic, faces precisely that problem. Her 17-year-old son suffers from ulcerative colitis, which needs treatment with Salasopirin or an equivalent drug.

"I might be able to find it on the market, but I can't afford it. It costs up to 50,000 dinars [$35]." That is a huge sum compared with a government employee's average salary of 6,000-7,000 dinars. Before the UN embargo, the dinar was worth $3.50; today a dollar will buy 1,500 dinars.

The six beds in one of the emergency wards in Ba'quba Hospital are occupied by children. They are accompanied by their mothers. It is Wednesday, the day when blood transfusions are carried out. They all suffer from thalassaemia, a hereditary and severe form of anaemia. They need five injections of Desferal a week.

"As there isn't enough of the drug, we can only give them one jab, after the transfusion," says a doctor. "There are blood donors, but the hospital often doesn't have enough pouches. Because we're short of pharmaceutical products we have no way of testing for HIV."

Iraq's water purification facilities are in urgent need of overhaul. Health professionals need to be properly paid if they are to do their job properly. A more balanced diet would contribute greatly to tackling Iraq's public health problem at its roots.

So is Iraq just another poor country? The answer is no. Before the 1990 sanctions, shortages were unknown. Until the end of 1989 its health service was of "high quality", according to the World Health Organisation: 97 per cent of the urban population and 78 per cent of country-dwellers received proper treatment. Malnutrition was unknown. The annual income per inhabitant was $2,800.

Yasushi Akashi, the United Nations under-secretary for humanitarian affairs, said during a recent visit to Iraq that deplorable conditions in hospitals both in Baghdad and in the north of the country were one of the consequences of the embargo. "There is a significant degree of human suffering," he said.

The fact is that the Iraqi health service is in a state of total collapse. Seven years of extremely harsh sanctions have broken the Iraqis' will to conquer adversity. There is a ban on the import of any product containing elements that might be used for military purposes. But Iraq can purchase anything else it wants as long as the UN Sanctions Committee gives it the go-ahead.

Although Iraq's crude oil reserves are put at 112 billion barrels, it has no ready cash. Not only have its assets been frozen, but it cannot export oil until it has met all the conditions of its disarmament programme. According to the special UN commission in charge of the problem, it has not yet done so, particularly as regards chemical weapons.

Iraq's population is paying the price. The regime itself has been unaffected. On December 10, 1996, UN Security Council Resolution 986 came into force. It authorises Iraq to receive $1.32 billion in return for oil. That sum will go towards paying for food and medicine desperately needed by its population of nearly 22 million. So, although a slight improvement is on the cards, Iraqis have a long way to go before seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.

(May 14)

'There's something wrong with your treatment'

A welcome change in Britain's style

EDITORIAL

THE first moves that Tony Blair's government has made on the European stage are to be welcomed. Within days the style of government changed. And style is important, in foreign policy and in other areas.

The style adopted by the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, contrasts sharply with the way the previous Conservative government used to go about things.

Obstructiveness on an almost daily basis, with a "no, no and no" message all too often beamed out of London, has been replaced by a refreshing new willingness to be European.

Britain is no longer kicking into touch; it wants to play in the centre of the European field. This new attitude has no precedent in the past 20 years. Equally unprecedented is the fact that two-thirds of the House of Commons is now made up of MPs who are more Europhile than Europhobic.

Those Conservative and Labour candidates who tried to exploit Euroscepticism, because they thought it was the flavour of the month or in tune with the mood of the electorate, were rejected.

But the wind of change in Britain is not just a matter of style. The Blair government has agreed that the European social charter should form part of the Maastricht treaty. It will adopt the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Cook and Brown want to operate in a spirit of conciliation, not of obstruction. The Tories were threatening to paralyse the Intergovernmental Conference on the reform of EU institutions, which is due to complete its work in Amsterdam in mid-June. The Labour government has decided, like the French, to seek compromise solutions wherever possible.

When it comes to a joint foreign and security policy, the Blair government has proposed a middle-of-the-road solution: it opposes any extension of majority voting, but, as Cook told Le Monde, pledges it will practise a policy of "constructive abstention".

Perhaps more important is the fact that, although it has reservations about the euro, Britain — which will hold the rotating presidency of the European Union when the first group of participants come to be selected in May 1998 — says it will do everything it can to make a success of the operation.

Cook says he wants Britain to be a leading player in Europe. Although it may be premature to talk of a *ménage à trois*, the old Franco-German couple can only be pleased with this turn of events.

(May 15)

Socialists try to keep allies on a tight leash

Ariane Chemin and Michel Noblecourt

WITH only 10 days to go before the first round of the general election, the French Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin, is sticking to his guns. At the summit meeting between the Socialist Party and Communist Party on April 29, Jospin made it clear that if the left were to win, the resulting government would pursue the policy that had gained the most electoral support in the first round, in other words that of the Socialists.

He also made it clear that promised changes, whether they involved boosting demand and purchasing power or introducing a 35-hour working week, would be implemented "gradually, not in 40 days or six months, but over five years".

Following the Socialist-Communist "joint declaration", the Communists' leader, Robert Hue, raised the possibility of "negotiations" about an agreement on what kind of government would be formed if the left were to win. On May 12, Jospin responded by saying that any such agreement was out of the question. If the Communists, like other leftwing parties, wanted to take part in government it would have to embrace the policies of the party that had notched up the biggest score in the first round.

Jospin accepted that there should be "competition" for the May 25 poll and that each party should "defend its territory", but only on condition that "things did not go too far". It would be a case of "hegemony", Jospin told Hue, if the policies that 10 per cent of the electorate had approved by voting Communist were imposed on the 30 per cent that had voted Socialist.

He was equally firm a day later, when he celebrated the electoral and political pact between the Socialists and the Greens by travelling to Dole, in the Jura, to lend his support to the Green leader, Dominique Voynet. The two leaders reiterated their opposition to the Rhine-Rhône Canal project, which Jospin described as "an economic absurdity". But he also pointed out that differences remained between the two parties, notably over the Verdeille law on hunting, whose abrogation he opposed.

At the beginning of this week, debate among the Socialists' allies on the left — the Communists, the Greens and the Citizens' Movement (MDC) — was dominated by the issue of participation in government.

Despite the occasional hiccup during the campaign, there is no doubt the Communists would want to join a leftwing government. In an attempt to make people forget his little "outburst" against the Socialists on television on May 8, Hue told the Parisien newspaper: "I want the left to succeed, and I shall remain unitarian to the end."

In order that "a true leftwing policy", in Hue's words, can be implemented, the minority parties are now insisting on a number of "immediately applicable" strong measures. Salaries are a case in point: the Communists' programme talks about "increasing the basic minimum wage by 1,000 francs [$172] a month as from July", whereas Jospin says he wants to avoid a wage explosion.

The 35-hour working week features in all the leftwing parties' programmes, but the Communists and the Greens insist on the need to introduce a framework law "immediately".

Europe remains a stumbling block. In Bordeaux this week, Hue said he was convinced that although there were very real obstacles, they could be overcome: The MDC has opted for a less docile approach, saying it intends to act as the gadfly of the new majority on the issue of the European Union and the euro.

On Europe, wages and the 35-hour working week, the minority leftwing parties are all banking on the rank and file putting pressure on a future government. Ex-Communist Charles Fiterman has called for a "scenario along the lines of the Popular Front".

The Greens have been debating what they should do to ensure that their programme and their showing at the polls is reflected in government. The Communists have stressed "the social aspirations" of the people, which alone can bring about a "genuine leftwing policy".

There will be plenty of chances for such feelings to express themselves during the remainder of the campaign. Every meeting of the far-right National Front sparks big local demonstrations. The "European marches against unemployment", an event that has the support of leftwing associations, trade unions and parties (including the Socialists), will be organised in Paris from May 16 to May 23.

Other more impromptu events, such as this week's rail strike, could provide the "true left", as it likes to call itself, with a further opportunity to make its voice heard.

(May 15)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Rural Poland faces uncertain future

Natalie Nougayrède in Rzeszotary

IN POLAND, the largest agricultural country in central and eastern Europe, 25 per cent of the working population is engaged in farming, compared with 5 per cent in France. Almost 8 million people live on 2 million family-owned farms, most of which are no bigger than four hectares. Disguised unemployment is high. The main obstacle to any restructuring of Polish agriculture is surplus manpower.

A number of large farms in western Poland have modernised successfully and found markets in other former communist countries. But in the rural east and south of the country the situation is critical.

Ryszard Burda has eight dairy cows and 12 hectares of land with which to feed them. In his barn there is an old Ursus tractor and a muck-spreader. Next to the cowshed, in a small room that he keeps meticulously clean, he has installed a milk refrigerating unit.



Hoedown . . . new jobs will have to be found for Poland's surplus rural workers PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

He is proud of all his equipment, of which he has more than anyone else in the village of Rzeszotary, in southern Poland. Every other day, a lorry from the co-operative comes to collect 140 litres of milk, for which he gets paid 0.50 zloty (15c) a litre. In this part of the country, where the landscape consists of a patchwork quilt of countless tiny plots of land, Burda is a "big" farmer.

This fragmentation of the land, which results from the fact that collectivisation was not carried out as ruthlessly in Poland as it was in other central European countries, is another factor that seriously hampers modernisation.

Burda says his land is so far-flung he cannot put his cows out to grass — "I'd have to put one on each plot!" Nor can he increase his herd. He has tried to persuade his farmer neighbours to form some sort of joint venture, but it is difficult: "No one wants to change."

Burda dreads Poland's joining the European Union. "I'm worried by all those problems of quotas. Will we be able to go on selling our products? My milk is good, but Danish and Dutch farmers produce an incomparably better product with all their public health standards." Burda has got his two young sons to study at university, because "there is no guarantee that in a few years' time farming will still be profitable".

The countdown to the moment when Poland joins the EU has begun. The French president, Jacques Chirac, would like that to happen in 2000. Overpopulation in rural Poland could lead to a serious social crisis. Once exposed to Western competition, many inefficient farms may not survive.

Most Polish agricultural products do not meet EU health standards, let alone packaging and marketing criteria; and they remain relatively expensive. So it is far from certain they will succeed in becoming competitive.

Danuta Hubner, secretary of the Polish committee for EU integration, claims her country will withstand the shock. "We will need to redeploy country-dwellers," she says.

She lists several possible avenues of rural development: agri-tourism, improved infrastructure, and the forming of companies to process farm products. "We can't just sit back and wait for our farmers to get handouts from Brussels," she says. While her attitude may be reassuring for Western farmers, it is the kind of thing that inflames discussion of the issue in Poland.

The debate is all the more acrimonious because it has been accompanied by political tensions, which were illustrated on April 10 by the sacking of the "reformist" agriculture minister, Roman Jagielinski, who stood accused of having caused a fall in the price of wheat by authorising the import of cereals from the United States.

His sacking marked a fresh victory for the "conservatives" over the "modernists" within the powerful Polish Peasant Party (PPP), which has run the country for the past four years with its coalition partner, the (ex-communist) Democratic Left Alliance.

The PPP officially favours Poland's entry into the EU, but has in practice blocked all major reforms for one simple reason: a restructured farming industry would mean fewer farmers and therefore fewer voters for the PPP, which hopes to play a leading role in negotiations between Warsaw and the EU.

In Swiatniki Gorne, a village in the southern region of Galicia, Stanislaw and Anna Nowak farm five hectares. The Nowaks eat what they produce — "that way we buy fewer imported products," Mrs Nowak says.

In a workshop next to the barn, she and her three sons make padlocks, door handles and wooden benches, which they sell at markets all over the country. The family has diversified its activities. What worries Mrs Nowak about the EU is not competition but something else: "Foreigners, especially Germans, will come and buy up our land for peanuts. They'll monopolise everything."

Jaroslaw Kalinowski, a PPP member who was appointed agriculture minister on April 21, says: "We shall have to take protective measures, as the price of land is 10-30 times cheaper in Poland than it is in EU countries."

Kalinowski is keen to protect small farmers from what he calls "the return of the lords", in other words the big landowners.

The Poles have an almost sacred relationship with the land. Poland is a country whose borders have shifted many times, and it was once wiped completely off the map. "We love our land, and we want to keep it as it is for the sake of our children," says a farmer. Poland's joining the EU will be about much more than just quotas or profitability: it will have a destabilising effect on the values of Polish society.

(May 4-5)

Slovak Jews angered by new history

Martin Plichta in Bratislava

"THE carpentry workshops in the camp of Sered [an internment camp for Slovak Jews 35km east of Bratislava] were the most modern and most productive in Slovakia . . . During the school holidays, children could spend a period outside the camp with Jewish families who were at liberty . . . Jewish doctors looked after the health of the camp inmates. Dentists even had gold for dentures, something the great majority of the Slovak population could not afford."

This description, which has caused an outcry among the small Jewish community in Slovakia that survived the Holocaust, comes not from a privately circulated or banned revisionist book, but from an official history of Slovakia. The Slovak education ministry has just distributed 90,000 copies of the book to teachers.

Dusan Kovac, head of the History Institute, says: "This manual is a dangerous falsification of history which is deeply coloured by the clerical-fascist ideology of the Slovak state [1939-45]."

Its author, Milan Durica, who teaches at Padua University in Italy, is a notorious admirer of the regime headed by Monsignor Jozef Tiso, president of the "first Slovak republic", which was founded on Hitler's orders in March 1939, at a time when Nazi troops occupied Bohemia and Moravia.

Tiso was hanged in 1947 after being convicted of high treason and crimes against humanity: he had allowed almost all the 70,000 Jews in pre-war Slovakia to be deported, and called in German troops to help put down the uprising by the national Slovak resistance movement in August 1944.

In the course of last month's celebration of the 50th anniversary of Tiso's death by the Slovak National party — one of the three parties in the ruling coalition, and the one to which the education minister Eva Sladkovska belongs — there were attempts to reassess Tiso's role.

It is argued in some quarters that he did everything he could to protect the Jews, and was unaware — "in good faith" — of the nature of the death camps. Durica has written: "The deportation of young Jews who were fit to work came in for sharp criticism in Slovakia, particularly because it separated families. So after the then prime minister had interceded with Adolf Eichmann [the organiser of the Final Solution], they began on April 11, 1942, to deport whole families."

To counter this "mystification of history", as Kovac calls it, the leader of the Jewish community in Slovakia, Jozef Weiss, has urged the government to make a "clear condemnation of manifestations of fascism", particularly as several Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated in recent weeks.

(May 10)

Japan finally recognises its Ainu minority

Philippe Pons in Tokyo

JAPAN'S parliament has just dented the myth that the Japanese form an homogeneous people. Its almost unanimous vote on May 8 in favour of a law to promote Ainu culture marked the first occasion on which the existence of an ethnic minority in the Japanese archipelago has been officially recognised.

The oneness and homogeneity of the Japanese people have been an essential part of national dogma ever since the nation state came into being during the Meiji period in the second half of the 19th century.

Only 10 years ago, the then prime minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, still decreed that Japan was a country that consisted "of a single ethnic group". Not only were minorities marginalised, but their very existence was denied.

Modern Japan did not just invade its regional neighbours. It earlier "colonised" lands along its borders — the small independent kingdom of Okinawa to the south, and the Ainu-occupied island of Hokkaido to the north.

The Ainu were hunter-gatherers whose culture once straddled a huge territory, from Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands to Hokkaido and the northern part of Honshu, well before the Japanese settled there. The first mention of their existence goes back to the 4th century. They were later pushed southwards by the Russians and northwards by the Japanese.

The "Japanisation" of Hokkaido, first systematically implemented at the beginning of the Meiji period, signed the death warrant of the Ainu people and their culture. The 1899 law on the "protection of former natives" — abrogated by the law passed last week — aimed to assimilate the Ainu by eradicating their culture. They were robbed of their land and their language, forced to take Japanese names, and suffered heavy loss of life.

They became a fast-dwindling minority that was at best regarded as quaint, at worst discriminated against. Officially, only 25,000 of them are left today, but probably as many again prefer to conceal their Ainu origins.

At the beginning of the seventies the Ainu became restive and demanded that their identity be recognised. The new law marks a first step. But it makes no mention of the aggression and forced integration to which they were subjected in the past, nor does it grant them the status of an aboriginal people (who have certain rights in their capacity as first occupants). The lawmakers feared such a step might encourage the Ainu to demand the restitution of their territories.

Following a dispute over the construction of a dam that submerged an Ainu holy site on Hokkaido, a court in Sapporo recently ruled that the expropriation was illegal, given the ethnic and religious significance of the site. The plaintiffs were thus recognised as belonging to an aboriginal people.

Although Japan has yet to address the question of whether it is a multiracial state or not, it will now at least have to recognise the diversity of its people.

(May 14)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

The Washington Post

Scandal Engulfs President Kim's Son

Mary Jordan in Tokyo

PROSECUTORS in Seoul last Saturday arrested the younger son of South Korean President Kim Young Sam on bribery and tax-evasion charges, in a sensational scandal that has captivated the country and will likely affect the upcoming presidential election.

Kim Hyun Chul, 37, is accused of taking $3.6 million in bribes from businessmen seeking favors from his father. He also is charged with accepting another $3.7 million in cash donations from businessmen and laundering the cash to avoid paying $1.5 million in taxes.

Prosecutors say the younger Kim had more than 100 bank accounts, where he tried to hide money given to him by businessmen seeking government contracts or licenses. Kim has admitted taking some of the money, but has denied it was bribes. If found guilty of both bribery and tax evasion, he could be sentenced to life in prison.



President Kim Young Sam's son, Hyun Chul, is arrested in Seoul PHOTOGRAPH: YUN SUK BONG

The president, who has made fighting corruption a cornerstone of his administration, has not been accused of wrongdoing. But analysts say the scandal has paralyzed his presidency and diminished his influence in selecting a candidate to succeed him in the December election. Kim Young Sam was elected in 1992 and by law is limited to one five-year term.

The elder Kim, who has been buffeted by repeated scandals involving close aides and now his son, has become a virtual caretaker president with more than six months left in his term. Seeking to minimize the damage, he issued a formal apology for the "severe shock and disappointment" that his son's arrest has caused the nation.

"From now on, President Kim will sternly punish, according to the law and regardless of status or rank, those linked to corruption," said a statement issued by the Blue House, the presidential office. "It is hoped that through this incident the corruption deeply rooted in our politics, economy and society will be expunged."

The paralysis in the final months of Kim's presidency also puts him in a weaker position to deal with North Korea at a time when South Korea and the United States are working to bring the North to the negotiating table to discuss peace. Many believe genuine improvements in North-South relations, which the United States sees as key to stability on the edgy Korean Peninsula, may be delayed until a new South Korean president takes office.

The North Koreans repeatedly denounce Kim Young Sam as a "traitor" and a "puppet" of the United States. Recognizing his weakness, analysts say, North Korea may resist improving ties until they can deal with his successor.

The arrest of the younger Kim has caused a sensation in South Korea. It has captivated the country partly because of the depth of the corruption it represents, and partly because many see it as proof of the health and maturity of South Korean democracy.

Kim's government is the first in modern times to be headed by a popularly elected civilian politician with no military ties. In three decades of military authoritarian rule that preceded Kim's presidency, the idea that a close relative of the nation's leader might be arrested was laughable.

Previous military leaders considered themselves "all powerful, all-knowing, omnipotent untouchables," said Lee Jung Hoon, who teaches political science at Seoul's Yonsei University. "To have a son arrested during a president's term is big news. But the public opinion was so strong, government prosecutors could not have let him walk."

President Kim ordered the prosecution of his two immediate predecessors, Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, who are now serving jail terms for corruption and treason. But numerous scandals close to him have led to allegations by opposition politicians that he himself is corrupt and should step down.

Opposition leaders hope to broaden the criminal investigation of Kim's son to find out more about the president's campaign-finance practices. They contend that the younger Kim siphoned off leftover campaign funds for private use.

Analysts say the president is deeply concerned about who will succeed him. A hostile successor could launch the kind of investigation into Kim's administration that Kim launched against Roh and Chun.

Nam Si Uk, publisher of Mun Hwa Ilbo, a daily newspaper in Seoul, said the arrest marked a "turning point" in South Korean political history. "It implies that Korean society is in a transitional period from an authoritarian one to a democratic one," Nam said.

Clinton Apologizes to Tuskegee Victims

John F. Harris and Michael A. Fletcher

THE APOLOGY came more than six decades after the injustice began but not too late for Herman Shaw to hear it.

Shaw turned turn 95 last week, but he was in his early 30s when his government deceived him, letting his syphilis go untreated in the name of a twisted brand of science that came to be known as the "Tuskegee Experiment."

Last week, Shaw stood in the East Room of the White House and declared, "It is never too late to work to restore faith and trust." Then he sat down and listened to President Clinton, who wiped a tear away as he stood at the podium.

"What was done cannot be undone, but we can end the silence," Clinton said. "We can stop turning our heads away, we can look you in the eye and say, on behalf of the American people, what the United States government did was shameful, and I am sorry."

The last three words came with emphasis, pauses after each one, and were followed by applause from the audience. There are eight survivors of the Tuskegee experiment, which began in 1932 and did not end until a newspaper expose four decades later, and five were at the White House. They are old men now — Fred Simmons puts his age at 110 — and several arrived in wheelchairs.

The audience included family members of victims no longer living. And it included Mary Harper, who as a young student nurse worked on the Tuskegee experiment; she said she knew an injustice was being done but felt powerless to stop it.

The formal name of the experiment was Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male, carried out by the U.S. public health service. The agency, said Vice President Al Gore, pursued its "worthy goal in a manner that was irredeemably cruel."

Participants were lured by promises of free medicine and meals. They were never told their venereal disease was being left untreated to study its long-term effects. The attitudes that prompted such a study, said Clinton, were "clearly racist." And the mistrust has echoed through the decades. The Tuskegee experiment is commonly cited as a prime reason for the distrust many African Americans have for medical research in particular and government in general.

"Tuskegee would always come up when people recounted incidents that leads them to believe we should not trust government," said Rep. Maxine Waters, D-California, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. "It keeps coming up. That may be the legacy."

Clinton announced several steps intended to address this mistrust. They included the award of a $200,000 grant to Alabama's Tuskegee University to help build a center on bioethics and research. Clinton also directed Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala to report back in 180 days with recommendations for how to better include minority communities in health care research.

The Tuskegee study charted the progress of the disease in 399 black men who had syphilis for at least two years but showed no symptoms and were not told they had the disease. The aim of the study was to withhold treatment from the men and compare their health to that of non-syphilitic black men in a control group.

The study began at a time when treating syphilis was difficult. But it continued long after the development of penicillin in the 1940s. It also continued amid serious doubts that any useful information was being gleaned from the study. By the time the experiment was halted, at least 100 men had died of syphilis or related complications, at least 40 wives had been infected and 19 children had contracted the disease at birth. Clinton said the victims and their families are the only people with the "power to forgive," and that attending the ceremony "shows you have chosen a better path than your government did so long ago."

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Indonesia: A Chance To Breathe

EDITORIAL

THE WORLD'S fourth most populous country, Indonesia, is holding a general election May 29. The ruling party says it intends to win with 70.02 percent of the vote (up from 68 percent last time around). Its confidence may in part be explained by the fact that, as one Indonesian general recently said, "opposition parties do not exist in Indonesian democracy."

President Suharto, who has been in power for more than 30 years, has governed his nation autocratically, but his reign has not been entirely despotic. At least until recently, one couldn't imagine the Indonesian regime sending someone to jail for possessing a fax machine, as the Burmese junta does. The press and nongovernmental organizations, inside very definite limits, were allowed some room to maneuver. And the economy has performed impressively, growing at an annual rate of 6 percent during the 1980s and nearly 8 percent this decade. Today, only one in seven Indonesians lives in poverty, as officially defined.

In nations such as South Korea and Taiwan, this kind of economic growth led to political liberalization. In the early 1990s, it seemed as though Indonesia was cautiously taking the same path. But in the past three years, Mr. Suharto has reversed course, putting his nation's future in peril. At the age of 76, he refuses to make any provisions for an orderly succession. His relatives and cronies are enriching themselves in an increasingly corrupt atmosphere.

Recently, the regime has cracked down hard, arresting labor organizers and political opponents alike. Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of a previous president and a potential opposition figure with popular appeal, has been essentially banned from public life. Students have received jail terms of more than 10 years for urging democratic reform. In March the government arrested a former member of parliament, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, and charged him with subversion. His crime: sending out greeting cards urging people not to vote in the election.

Its geography, ethnic mix and religious diversity give Indonesia reason to move cautiously in any reforms; these are matters that Indonesians themselves will have to sort out. But outsiders can play a role, offering to send election observers and speaking out for Indonesia's prisoners of conscience. In July, the United States will send its representatives to Tokyo for the World Bank's annual gathering of donors to Indonesia, where they should make their concern clear. For if Mr. Suharto does not give the civil society a chance to breathe and develop, the nation's economic prospects also must be considered cloudy.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Kabila Still Unknown Entity to U.S.

Thomas W. Lippman

AS LAURENT Kabila's rebel juggernaut rolled across Zaire for the past seven months, U.S. officials scrambled repeatedly to devise a response that would contain the conflict without perpetuating the corrupt rule of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

But events outran diplomacy, partly because Washington had multiple and sometimes competing objectives. Zaire's neighbors rebuffed U.S. entreaties to stay out of the conflict, and now one of Africa's biggest and potentially richest countries has fallen under the control of a leader over whom the United States apparently wields little influence.

Kabila's triumph has many positive effects, Clinton administration officials said. It gets rid of Mobutu, whom the United States supported during the Cold War but who no longer had value as a strategic proxy. It should stabilize the fragile peace in neighboring Angola by cutting off Zairean support to longtime rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, another former U.S. protege who outlived his usefulness.

And it reinforces Zaire's eastern neighbors, especially Uganda, which Washington supports in its conflict with Sudan.

Still to be answered, however, is the question of what kind of regime Kabila plans to establish in Kinshasa. The United States is pressing for multiparty elections and has promised Kabila financial and logistical support to conduct the balloting and effect an orderly transition to democratic rule, administration officials said. But there is deep concern in the administration that Kabila will eventually be not much different from his predecessor.

"We don't want the replacement of one autocratic regime by another, though that might be what we get," one senior official said.

According to Rep. Cynthia McKinney, D-Georgia, who met with him last week, Kabila "is committed to having free and fair elections that include participation by all political parties, and he expects that there will be many parties because that's the nature of Zairean politics. His first objective is the eradication of Mobutuism, and then the rebel alliance would participate in the elections."

Others who have observed Kabila, however, have said he tells people what he thinks they want to hear and that he has shown signs — especially in his treatment of Rwandan Hutu refugees that his troops encountered on their drive across Zaire — of brutality and a thirst for revenge. In their view, the stage described by McKinney as "eradication of Mobutuism" might last years.

According to senior U.S. officials, as Kabila's rebellion arose and spread, Washington was repeatedly caught by surprise — first by the insurgency itself, then by the speed of its advance, then by the eagerness of Zaire's neighbors to help put the skids to Mobutu. Priorities kept shifting in response to events on the ground, officials said, but there was one constant element: The United States would do nothing to perpetuate Mobutu's regime.

Even in pressing for a cease-fire last winter, officials said, the United States did so on the understanding it would be a prelude to transition, not a pretext for leaving Mobutu in power.

Three times during the Cold War, the United States intervened directly to bolster Mobutu against armed attempts to overthrow him. But that was in the days when Cuba had troops in Angola and much of Africa was an arena for the U.S.-Soviet struggle. In recent years, however, Washington has increasingly distanced itself from a ruler widely reviled as corrupt, tyrannical and a threat to Zaire's neighbors.

Kabila, a longtime opponent of Mobutu who had lived mostly in the bush in Eastern Zaire for a quarter century, triggered an armed rebellion last year when Mobutu moved to expel ethnic Tutsis who had lived in the region for generations.

In the beginning, the focus of Washington's concern was the fate of tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees — mostly Hutu, the arch foes of the Tutsis — who were living in Eastern Zaire and threatened by the Tutsi revolt.

The United States and its allies were within days of sending a military force to the region to protect the refugees when the extremist Hutu militiamen controlling the refugee camps suddenly fled the Tutsi advance, enabling most of the refugees to return peacefully to Rwanda.

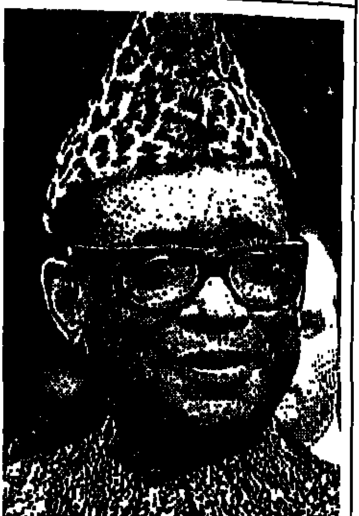
With the Tutsi-led Rwandan government aiding Kabila's forces, Washington then directed its efforts at containing the conflict, which threatened to engulf much of Central Africa.

But Uganda, Angola and other countries of the region with long-standing grievances against Mobutu supported Kabila anyway, partly because they did not find Washington's messages credible, according to U.S. officials and African diplomats.

The reason is that Uganda and Rwanda in particular were part of a U.S.-supported regional coalition opposed to the fundamentalist Islamic regime in Sudan, and participants in the discussions about Zaire understood that Washington did not want a breach with those countries, officials and diplomats said.

"When we considered how to squeeze Uganda and the others we — how can I put this delicately?" one senior official said. "We have a common concern about one of their neighbors."

"We have been very transparent about it," said Ugandan ambassador Edith Ssempala. "There were rebels


Mobutu: outlived his usefulness as a strategic proxy for the U.S.

[against Uganda] training in eastern Zaire, it affected us and the Americans understand that."

Ssempala said that "in the beginning the Americans expressed a lot of concern about the disintegration of Zaire. When my president [Yoweri Museveni] was here [in Washington] in February, he said that argument was a red herring. He said nobody was working for the disintegration of Zaire."

The perception that Washington was less than determined to head off external support for the rebels was reinforced in late March, independent analysts said, when first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Uganda, hailed its economic and social progress and said nothing about its involvement in Zaire.



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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Squash, Not Corn, Was Main Crop of Early Americans

Curt Suplee

ANCIENT Americans took up farming twice as long ago as previously thought, and their first big crop was not the fabled corn plant, but squash, a new analysis has found.

About 10,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers in what is now southern Mexico started hedging their edible bets by cultivating a baseball-size squash called *Cucurbita pepo*, probably to supplement less predictable food sources, Smithsonian scientist Bruce D. Smith writes in a recent issue of the journal Science.

That is at least 5,000 years before the first evidence of domesticated beans and corn — the other two staple cultivars of meso-American prehistory — and roughly coincident with the dawn of agriculture, which occurred independently at a half-dozen sites around the world.

"This pushes Mexico back in the time frame to approximately the same as the Near East," where barley first was raised in the Jordan Valley 10 millennia ago, said Smith, who directs the archaeobiology program at the National Museum of Natural History.

In the Near East and Asia, "it is often assumed that hunters and gatherers made a very short transition to farmers," Smith said, with some estimates as brief as 500 years. But his new analysis of squash seeds, stems and rinds from a cave in Oaxaca show that the changeover lasted some 6,000 years in the Americas.

As recently as 1995, in his book The Emergence Of Agriculture, Smith placed the origin of cultivation in meso-America at about 4,700 years ago. That chronology had become the prevailing view after decades of spirited scientific argument. Some of the oldest known agricultural remains (seeds and bits of plants) from the region were discovered in the 1960s by Kent V. Flannery of the University of Michigan in a cave named Guila Naquitz near Oaxaca.

Initial dating of the material by the radiocarbon method suggested that the find was close to 10,000 years old. In those days, objects as small as seeds could not be dated using radiocarbon because the process required comparatively large amounts of material. So instead of testing the plant relics, Flannery dated charcoal from a nearby excavated hearth that was presumed to be the same age as the plants.

By the mid-1980s, however, researchers had developed a more sophisticated technique for assessing the radiocarbon age of biological specimens, called accelerator mass spectroscopy (AMS), that could analyze very small quantities of sample material. When that method was applied to the Oaxaca remains, it showed that they were no more than 5,000 years old.

Smith set out to clarify the matter. He went to Mexico last year and obtained additional *C. pepo* samples from the cave. AMS dating showed the samples to be between 10,000 and 8,000 years old, reviving the early agriculture theory; close scrutiny indicated they were artificially evolved cousins of wild squash that had developed larger seeds and different shapes in the course of cultivation.

Taliban Ignores Illicit Harvest

Kenneth J. Cooper
in Kandahar

AFTER the Taliban militia took control of Afghanistan's capital last September, its leaders vowed to establish the most Islamic state in the world. Two months later, in the planting season in southern Afghanistan's opium poppy fields, the fundamentalist militia denounced the flowering crop used to produce heroin as un-Islamic.

But at the start of harvest time here in the Taliban's southern stronghold, mature fields of white, pink and red poppies are in bloom. They splash color even inside the war-damaged city of Kandahar, the militia's headquarters, where one small plot flourishes across a dirt road from the mud-walled central jail.

In the course of their nearly three-year-old fight to rule Afghanistan, the Taliban's leaders have cracked down — sometimes violently — on the people living in the two-thirds of the country that has come under their control. The Muslim clerics and their followers have punished harshly women in dress deemed immodest, men with clean-shaven chins, adulterers, thieves and sports players.

But they have shown no such resolve with producers of raw material for intoxicants clearly forbidden in the Koran, Islam's holy book.

"There are no signs they have been doing anything," said Angus Geddes, a U.N. official working to persuade Afghans to grow other crops.

According to the State Department and the United Nations, Afghanistan harvests at least 30 percent of the world's opium poppies. By the State Department's reckoning, that makes it the world's second-largest producer of opium poppies. The U.N. Drug Control Program, using different survey methods, estimates that Afghanistan's output now rivals Burma's as the largest.

More than 90 percent of Afghanistan's poppy-growing areas are under Taliban control. The country's biggest poppy-producing province, Helmand, borders Kandahar Province to the east. Yet despite the Taliban's professed religious convictions, it has not acted with customary zeal to stop poppy cultivation. Its reluctance stems from the damage Afghanistan's economy has suffered during nearly two decades of war, the revenue derived from a 10 percent tax collected on opium and a fear of losing popular support from hundreds of thousands of small growers of poppies.

"Everyone is growing poppy. If we try to stop this immediately, the people will be against us," said Abdul Rashid, drug control director for Kandahar Province.

Some Taliban leaders have suggested to U.N. officials that they would be more inclined to enforce international anti-drug agreements and ban poppy cultivation if the United Nations and Western nations recognized their fundamentalist regime, which no government has done. The hints amount to a kind of narco-diplomacy — seeking international legitimacy while condoning trafficking in illegal drugs.

"I've heard that argument: Once we get recognition, then we will deliver all the good things," said Norbert Holl, a U.N. mediator assigned to negotiate an end to the ongoing civil war between the Taliban and an alliance of northern militias, including the former government of president Burhanuddin Rabbani that the Taliban drove from Kabul last year.

Rashid said the civil war was partly responsible for the continuing poppy cultivation. "When we take control of the entire country, we will stop it. In these days, we're too busy with the fighting," he said.

Rather than destroy easily identifiable poppy fields and risk popular wrath, Rashid said, the Taliban has adopted the more difficult strategy of intercepting drug shipments along Afghanistan's 1,500-mile border with Pakistan and 580-mile border with Iran. The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is particularly porous, with many back roads winding through rugged terrain.

Afghanistan's poppy growers have ready buyers who take the opium harvest to labs along the Pakistani border or inside Pakistan and Turkey, where it is processed into heroin. Most Afghan heroin winds up in Europe, routed through Turkey, Iran or Central Asia. Little reaches the United States, according to U.N. surveys.

Afghans do not consume much opium or heroin, though hospital personnel in Kandahar said they occasionally discover surgical patients are addicts because they need massive doses of anesthesia. The Taliban has enforced a ban on hashish, a milder drug used by soldiers on both sides of the civil war.

For Afghan farmers, planting opium poppy on at least part of their land represents a sensible choice in one of the world's poorest countries, where small farming and undisguised smuggling appear to be the major economic activities. Opium poppy pays more and requires less water than other crops. It also reaps cash advances from buyers to pay for fertilizer and seeds.

"That is the reason we are growing this — to make more money," explained Issa Khan as he shoveled mud to redirect the flow of irrigation water to his blooming poppy fields. "Nobody has asked us to stop."

Farmers have grown poppy alongside wheat, fruit trees and spices as insurance against the failure of other crops that need more water, which is scarce in many areas. Because he earns twice as much from poppy as he does from wheat, Khan said he planted five acres of poppy and four acres of wheat during the winter growing season that is coming to an end. Wheat is the basic ingredient of a flat, unleavened bread that is an Afghan staple.

Before the Soviet invasion in 1979, the farmland seven miles west of Kandahar city that Khan and other poppy growers work was covered with grape vineyards. Local farmers said they blame the Russians for the vineyards' destruction during the decade-long war against the former Soviet army.

HELMAND Province, which produces about 60 percent of the poppy crop, was the country's breadbasket until an extensive irrigation system built with U.S. aid fell into disrepair — like most of Afghanistan's infrastructure — during two decades of warfare. "There was all this wheat and all this cotton, and now it's all this poppy," William Bergquist, a U.N. official based in Kandahar, said.

Geddes said the United Nations has tried to persuade poppy growers they can make as much money from fruit orchards, onions and other vegetables. Under another U.N. program, local leaders will be asked to ban poppy cultivation in their areas in exchange for a development project of their choice.

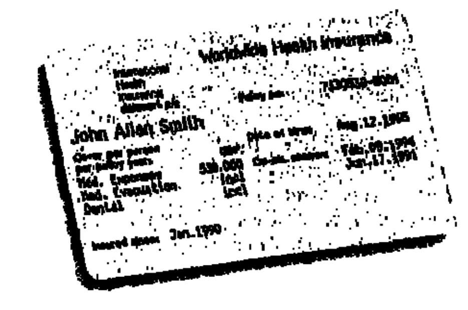
Both the State Department and the United Nations have reported that the Taliban collects a 10 percent tax on opium poppy.

Rashid denied the militia taxes poppy growers, but said local Muslim clerics might receive the tithe. One Afghanistan specialist doubted the poppy tax is a major revenue source for the Taliban, which has received the bulk of its war resources from other Islamic fundamentalists in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In three verses, the Koran warns Muslims against involvement with alcohol or drugs.

The Taliban's lax enforcement of those Koranic injunctions makes its regime less Islamic than in other Muslim countries that show zero tolerance for illegal drugs. In Afghanistan, Rashid said, the maximum penalty for drug trafficking is 20 years in prison. In Saudi Arabia, whose version of Islam is similar to the Taliban's, it is death.

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Children Of the Holocaust

Thomas Buergenthal

THE BOYS
The Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors
By Martin Gilbert
Henry Holt. 511pp. $30

IN THE labor camp of Kielce, Poland, established after some 20,000 inmates of the Kielce ghetto were transported to the extermination camp of Treblinka, all but three of the more than 30 children who had survived the liquidation of the ghetto were driven to the Jewish cemetery and executed. I was among the three survivors. Kielce was not unique. The murder of Jewish children was carried out in a systematic fashion throughout much of German-occupied Europe. Most of those who survived the labor camps and ghettos were transported to the concentration camps, particularly Auschwitz, and ended up in the gas chambers or died on the death marches when these camps were dissolved as the Allied armies approached.

In this book, Martin Gilbert, the well-known English historian, collects the wartime experiences of a group of teenagers, a few hundred strong, who survived the Holocaust and were brought to Britain in 1945. Styling themselves "the Boys" — hence the title of the book — these survivors, including some girls among them, have over the years remained in contact, even after some moved to other countries. In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of their liberation, they decided to write down the individual recollections of their lives.

The result is this book, in which Gilbert, who had come to know many of the "boys," lets them tell their story in their own words. He organizes these recollections in chronological order from the start of World War II to their liberation, the arrival in Britain and their lives thereafter. What we have here is a collective first-person history of the Holocaust seen through the eyes of its youngest victims. It is a story not only of the horrors of the Holocaust but also of the triumph of the human spirit, expressed in the physical and mental resilience of these youngsters, their finely tuned survival instinct, their will to live normal lives, and their conscious refusal to let themselves be consumed by hatred for those responsible for their suffering.

They tell their stories in a straightforward manner, without much introspection or sentimentality, driven by a desire to record what happened to them and their families. Here we find no evidence of the guilt some scholars claim to have encountered among Holocaust survivors. Rather, these survivors celebrate the fact of their survival as a victory over the Nazi death machine.

This is a brilliant contribution to the vast literature of the Holocaust. But this book does more than chronicle the genocide of a people and the eradication of a way of life. Those who seek insights into the character traits, physical and moral resilience, family backgrounds and personal beliefs of the most vulnerable of all Holocaust survivors will not be disappointed by the fascinating material recorded in these pages.



ILLUSTRATION: GARY VISKUPIC

When Should Healing Begin?

David Chanoff

THE SUNFLOWER
On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness
By Simon Wiesenthal
Schocken. 271 pp. $24

JESUIT spiritual masters teach the art of imaginative projection. Close your eyes, they tell retreatants, and project yourself into the scenes of Christ's life. Hear the jeers of the crowd as Jesus stumbles along the Via Dolorosa. Smell the rankness. See the contorted faces, the worn paving, a flash of blue sky. Feel the gouge of thorns and the trickle of blood down the forehead, the weight on the shoulders of the rough wooden cross.

It's unlikely that Simon Wiesenthal ever made the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, but he surely traveled his own personal Via Dolorosa through half a dozen World War II Nazi concentration camps. In The Sunflower he asks us to make our own mental projection and experience some of that along with him. More specifically, he asks readers to imagine that they are in his place for one single encounter that he, a condemned Jew, had with a young SS Ubermensch on the edge of his own extinction.

It happened in Lvov, where Wiesenthal was a camp inmate in 1942. Marched with his labor gang to shovel out the refuse of a German military hospital, he is taken inside by a nurse who leads him to a room where a blinded, skeleton-like soldier lies at death's door. When the dying German says he was an SS man, Wiesenthal winces and tries to leave. But the soldier pleads with him to stay, then launches into a strange and terrible confession.

One incident, he tells Wiesenthal, has tortured his conscience ever since it happened. Before he dies, he has to unburden himself, to a Jew. It's the only way to relieve some of the anguish in his heart over what he has done. As Wiesenthal listens, the SS man describes how in the town of Dnyepropetrovsk his unit was ordered to kill a group of Jews, mostly women, children and old people — how they forced the strongest to carry cans of gasoline into an empty house, how they then drove all of them into the house and sealed the door, how they lobbed grenades through the windows, and how they — he, too — shot down those who tried to escape. The whole scene has been burning in his mind ever since, particularly the sight of a family who had jumped from a window in front of him, a father, mother and little boy with black hair and big dark eyes.

Wiesenthal sits through the recitation like a cat on a hot tin roof, then listens as the German whispers a last plea for forgiveness. He understands that what he has heard has been a true confession and true contrition, but he says nothing. He stands up and walks out, silent. Despite the horrors he lived through, this encounter troubled Wiesenthal's own conscience for years, even after his eventual liberation. Just imagine, he asks readers at the end of his story, that you had been in my place listening to that soldier. What would you have done?

When Schocken first published The Sunflower in 1976, Wiesenthal's editors put that query to a group of eminent Christian and Jewish theologians, scholars, and writers. Their responses turned The Sunflower from a book into a symposium, and it quickly became a leading classroom tool for studying the Holocaust.

Now Schocken has put out a new edition, with many of the original responses and more than 30 new ones from such commentators as the Dalai Lama, Cambodia survivor Dith Pran, Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles and Chinese dissident Harry Wu. This new Sunflower offers a storehouse of thoughtful and provocative essays on the problem of guilt and forgiveness. I suspect it will also take its place as a unique cultural yardstick. Together with its predecessor, the book marks the temper of two eras, telling us something about where we were morally and psychologically 20 years ago, how far we may have come since then (if we have), and where we might possibly be headed.

That seems important. In the 20 years since the first Sunflower the world has witnessed Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. We are still digesting the destruction of tens of millions by Stalin and we've only just begun to register the even vaster numbers done to death by Mao. Strangely, in the midst of all this, the Holocaust still somehow seems sui generis — the combination of lethal racism and industrial technology is a peculiarly satanic brew. But there's no question that in two decades our notion of the human condition has darkened considerably. In these circumstances, the dilemma of guilt and forgiveness seems more topical than ever, and more urgent.

One of the recent respondents, Catholic Holocaust scholar Eva Fleischner, reports that in many years of using The Sunflower as a Holocaust text she's seen a striking division among her students. Almost without exception, her Christian students think Wiesenthal should have found some way to forgive the contrite SS man. Her Jewish students have thought otherwise. Actually, that same split was evident among the earlier set of respondents — those who answered for the 1976 edition. Most of the Christians, especially the churchmen, dwelled on the obligation to forgive. Few of the Jews wanted anything to do with it.

Twenty years on, though, there's been a subtle shift in the tenor of many respondents' answers. The dangers of "cheap grace," Paul Tillich's term, seem much more on the minds of the Christian theologians these days than it was then. "Dare we forgive Karl [the SS man]?" asks Harry James Cargas, a Catholic scholar on the executive board of the Catholic Center for Holocaust studies. "I cannot. God have mercy on my soul." Some, like Eva Fleischner, ponder what confession without atonement might be worth. Others, the Episcopalian priest Matthew Fox and religion professor Franklin Littell, direct attention to the complicity of Christianity in the Holocaust. You get the sense that Simon Wiesenthal's dilemma doesn't interest them as much as the unconfessed and unabsolved sins of clergy and ordinary Christians.

> **Forgiveness is a way of freeing ourselves, of saying, I refuse any longer to give you the power to define my life**

"Non-Jews," writes Lutheran theologian Martin Marty in an essay retained from the earlier volume but more representative of the new one, "and perhaps especially Christians should not give advice about Holocaust experience to its heirs for the next two thousand years. And then we shall have nothing to say." Maybe there are things, some of these Christian commentators seem to be implying, that are outside even the fundamental Christian credo of forgiveness, that have to be treated differently. Perhaps even heartfelt repentance cannot clean the slate, so radically does true evil affect perpetrators, victims, even onlookers.

In the new edition there's also a shift in tone among Jewish respondents. Most still insist that Wiesenthal was right not to forgive, that forgiveness of such things is impossible, especially for one who was not personally a victim, as Wiesenthal was not personally a victim of this SS man's act. But something else is at work too. Deborah Lipstadt, for example, professor of Holocaust studies at Emory, focuses on the process of *teshuvah*, repentance. Whether this particular SS man performed *teshuvah* is open to question. But could he have? Could any SS man have? The implication is that he could, and, if so, then the dialogue of repentance and forgiveness might have proceeded. Yossi Halevi and Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg make the point that while the evil of the Holocaust was unfathomable and its perpetrators unforgivable, those not involved, the next generation of Germans, for example, do not bear guilt. We must, they seem to say, find a way to put a quietus to the past.

That's the thrust of Rabbi Harold Kushner's discussion too. Forgiving, says the author of When Bad Things Happen To Good People, isn't always something a person does for someone else; it is something that happens inside us, for us. Forgiveness is a way of freeing ourselves, of saying I refuse any longer to give you the power to define my life.

These are, it seems to me, attempts to go beyond, to encapsulate the Holocaust experience without diminishing it or pretending that there really can be a clean slate, "forgiving," as one respondent put it, "without forgetting." This has got to be one of the most innately difficult of human endeavors, also one of the most necessary. How do we cordon off anger so that it doesn't consume us? How do we relate to our former enemies, who may have done terrible things to us, but with whom we need to find a way to live?

If I have one bone to pick with the editors of the new Sunflower, it is that they did not sufficiently broaden the range of respondents. They will think that unfair. Two Bosnians are here, a Bulgarian, a Tibetan, a Chinese, a Cambodian. But I miss the voice of a Solzhenitsyn or one of his fellow Gulag victims. I miss hearing voices from Native America and black America. I miss a voice from the new South Africa, where so far the business of witnessing and documenting has taken precedence over punishment and revenge, and where amnesty has become the chosen principle of closure.

I particularly miss voices from our own Vietnam era. That war, of course, cannot be compared to the Holocaust. It involved neither unadulterated evil nor anything like pure guilt and innocence. At the same time it was far more complex morally, and the rage it spawned seems bone-deep — witness James Carroll's National Book Award-winning An American Requiem and Paul Hendrickson's runner-up The Living And The Dead. I'd give a lot to hear what John McCain has to say on the subject of guilt and forgiveness, or John Kerry or Phan Thi Kim Phuc, the little napalmed Vietnamese girl (now 30) who embraced retired Air Force colonel and former POW Norm McDaniel at the Wall last Veterans Day in front of thousands of grieving vets. Maybe Rev. Marty, Rabbi Kushner and the others are telling us something about this — that true grace doesn't come cheap but that forgiveness is something we eventually have to do, not for anyone else, but for ourselves.

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Campus jobs on the line

James Meikle reports on a higher education catastrophe in the making

BRITISH universities are preparing for the worst job cuts since the early 1980s with hundreds of staff already taking redundancy or early retirement.

A snapshot survey by the Guardian, involving more than 40 institutions, indicates more upheaval as senior managers assess the fall-out from further tough public spending limits, the concentration of vital research funds on fewer institutions and the effects of Sir Ron Dearing's recommendations on restructuring the whole higher education system in July.

These will include demands for more co-operation between universities and colleges, the growth of regional roles for some, and greater selectivity for research funding.

Some institutions also blame the latest national pay deal — 2.9 per cent for academics and 3.9 per cent for manual staff with similar rises next year — for making things worse.

Many in higher education are furious that their plight never became an election issue and fear Labour's promises to schools could mean a further shift of funds.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England was due to make its own assessment of the financial health of universities earlier this month although it insists only half a dozen are on the latest "worry" list, and they are different from those reported in secret to the Commons Public Accounts Committee three years ago. Last autumn the council said more than 70 institutions expected to be operating at a loss by 2000, and although numbers of academic staff would fall before then, they might recover by around the end of the century.

Non-teaching staff at English institutions would fall by at least 2 per cent and that was believed to be an underestimate. But several universities are already reassessing the strategic plans that led to those figures, and vice-chancellors say in three years the system will be £3 billion short of what it needs. Most considering further cuts in staff or restructuring of departments insist they are doing so to keep solvent and out of crisis.

Most headlines have so far been devoted to closure or scaling down of courses in physics or chemistry at Brunel, East Anglia, Essex, Coventry, Birkbeck, London, De Montfort, and Leeds Metropolitan. More drastic sharing and paring is on the agenda.

The summer council of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) met in Scarborough last week. They considered calls for industrial action to protect jobs in the wake of plans by Nottingham university to make 50 academics redundant, by the University of Wales Swansea to lose 100 posts, half of them academics, and by Lancaster university, a research assessment "winner", to shed about another 40 academic jobs, on top of a voluntary programme that has already seen 200 staff, mainly non-academics, go.

Northern Ireland's two universities have suffered extra problems because money has been diverted to security budgets. Queen's, Belfast, cutting between 60 and 70 jobs through voluntary schemes, is not renewing fixed-term contracts and is considering "radical surgery".

Scores more jobs are expected to go in Welsh higher education, which did particularly badly in the public spending round. Scottish institutions are girding themselves for 5.5 per cent cuts in state support in 1998-99 and a review of engineering north of the border is to start soon.

Graham Zellick, principal of Queen Mary and Westfield College, London, said: "The hope is that the money that will be freed by abolishing what is left of the student grant will be retained within higher education. That will be one clear early test if the Government stands by universities or acquiesces in their decline." And Leslie Wagner, vice-chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University, reminded of the last government's decision to cap student numbers to allow for "consolidation", said: "If this is consolidation, God help us when we are squeezed."

David Triesman, general secretary of the AUT, said: "By comparison, the crisis of 1981-2 will look like a vicarage tea party. The Government should tell universities: 'Stop now, wait for Dearing and don't press the panic button'."

The prospect of Bath university, a winner under research assessment, and University of the West of England, Bristol, merging, one of several options for closer collaboration on the table, has heightened speculation about universities close to each other joining forces.

Many institutions would not quantify likely job losses and disputed union claims where they had been made. They insisted some changes were needed to ensure a steady flow of bright young scholars into the academic ranks and said some changes would enhance the profile of important subjects, improve teaching methods, cut bureaucracy and free academic staff from time-wasting administration. More cash would be raised from private sources.

But many academics claim managers' mistakes have increased problems, especially where universities misjudged tactics in entering research assessments. There is also growing resentment at what some staff see as "fat cat" managers. Others complain that administrators are removing autonomy traditionally enjoyed by academic staff.

In all, 110 staff left Hertfordshire university in a year, but only one compulsorily, under its restructuring programme, and it believes a "significant proportion" of its posts will be refilled as the university is restored to a balanced budget next year. Westminster has lost 76 staff, including 10 technicians and support staff by compulsory measures, and the University of the West of England lost up to 50, although it hopes to replace about half of them.

Edinburgh university is about to launch a major review, despite 1,200 of its staff being in research groups assessed 4 or above. Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland said: "What the cuts will bring us is not salami-slicing but looking at the whole profile. We would rather be in fewer areas, keeping quality up, than spread ourselves too thinly." Both Edinburgh and Stirling were investigating the future shape of Japanese in Scotland.

Glasgow university, already embarked on a programme of shedding 90 senior academic jobs over three years, is looking at more early retirement packages in its "managed reconstruction". "It doesn't mean the slamming of doors all round the place. It means reinvesting in strategic areas where we see merit in doing so," said a spokesman.

Compulsory redundancies are happening at London Guildhall and Middlesex, where big "restructuring and re-balancing of academic staffing" is under way. Unions expect others. Early retirement programmes are in force at De Montfort, Salford, Kent, Newcastle, Aberystwyth, Westminster, the Open University, Nottingham Trent and Plymouth among other places. Oxford university, which had 60 takers for early retirement last year, may be able to unfreeze some of its 90 academic vacancies by October 1998.

The University of Central Lancashire says administrative staff will bear the brunt of cuts over the next five years. Support staff are also being made redundant at Queen Mary and Westfield, London, where state aid and money from overseas students is expected to have fallen by 11 per by 1999-2000.

Professor Zellick said the pay deal alone had led to a "colossal strain and will lead to the loss of posts".

Additional reporting by John Crace and Peter Kingston



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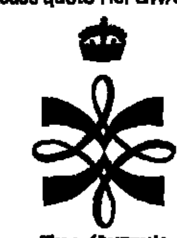
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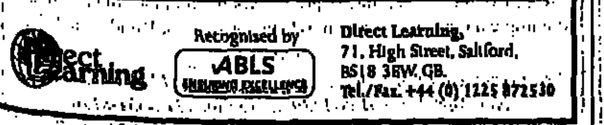
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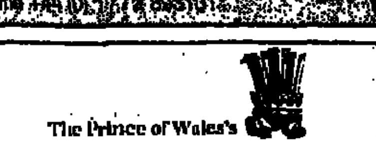
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Blair to offer clean break with the past

Environment is at centre stage for a government that sees protecting the world as good business and good politics, writes **Larry Elliott**

THE first few weeks of the Blair administration have proved one thing: Labour may not be as red as it once was, but it is one hell of a lot greener. One of the beneficial spin-offs of modernisation is that the obsession with growth at all costs has been ditched.

In the not-so-distant past, Labour viewed the environment as an optional extra, a luxury relevant only once the basic problem of boosting the per capita consumption of the population had been sorted out.

Sustainable development was seen as either a bit cranky or a middle-class obsession — something for the Volvo-driving bourgeoisie to get agitated about but not of the slightest interest to Labour's working-class supporters.

That was always a foolish and patronising attitude, not least because a war against pollution and the fight for a decent environment are the very stuff of socialism.

It has always been the working-class families who have lived next door to the toxic waste plants, the working-class children who have suffered worst from asthma caused by living in cities clogged with exhaust fumes, lead particles and noxious chemicals.

You do not find too many Volvo drivers living next to nuclear power plants or motorway slip-roads. They either move away or get up a protest group to kill the idea off.

Labour's election manifesto heralded a welcome shift away from the idea that living standards can be measured simply by GDP per head. Instead it talked of promoting new green technologies and businesses, stressing that "there is huge potential to develop Britain's environmental technology industries to create jobs, win exports and protect the environment".

It was absolutely right. Labour has recognised that environmental protection is not just good politics, but good business as well. It is not so much a free lunch, more a Neil Hamilton-style weekend blow-out at the Ritz.

The new thinking is symbolised by a forthcoming book that should be on the reading list of every minister. Factor Four argues that growth and a sustainable environment are not mutually incompatible. Rather, the greening of the economy can be combined with higher living standards, not just in the West but in those parts of the world that are justly envious of our levels of consumption.

This is a crucial point. If growth in the West is unsustainable, imagine what it would be like if the billions of poor people in Africa, Latin America and Asia were to consume as much as we in the West do. Some of the book's facts are, simply, alarming: 99 per cent of the materials used in the US production process end up as waste within six weeks; there are four times as many cars on the roads of Germany as there are in the whole of Africa.

But Factor Four is not a gloomy Doomsday-ish tome; it offers some hard-nosed, practical examples of how resource productivity could be increased four-fold by the harnessing of science and the application of some common sense.

Its proposals for cutting down on the energy wasted in air-conditioning and the total redesign of the car are harbingers of the next industrial revolution. Estimates already put the total value of the global environmental market at $400 billion a year, but at the moment the jobs and the rich profits are going to the Germans, the Japanese, the Americans and the Scandinavians.

The reason that Britain is being left behind is quite simple: while the Conservatives have been obsessed with free markets, deregulation and cost-cutting, the rest of the developed world has been prepared to plan, invest and — most crucially of all — regulate in order to stimulate those countries' environmental industries.

The United States under Bill Clinton is a case in point. Aware that it was losing ground to Germany and Japan, the administration drew up a Technology Innovation Strategy based on the premise that "the US now has a limited window of opportunity either to strengthen its own presence in this market, or be left behind".

The result was that the Environmental Protection Agency — a body that had real teeth — toughened regulation, forcing companies to develop greener products and technologies.

Germany has had no formal government strategy for supporting its environmental industry, but it has ferociously stringent environmental regulations, which have been the catalyst for rapid growth in the sector.

BRITAIN has had neither a long-term strategy nor a tough regulatory regime, and is now paying the price. More than 99 per cent of the firms in the sector are small- or medium-sized enterprises, and they will stay small- and medium-sized enterprises unless the new government is prepared to adopt a more hands-on approach. The UK has a market share of around 6 per cent, against 29 per cent for Germany and 22 per cent for the US.

But things are starting to change. All departments are charged with promoting policies to sustain the environment, and Parliament will have an environmental audit committee to ensure "high standards across government".

Moreover ministers who actually believe in regulation have been put in a position where they can start to change things; the new environment super-ministry contains John Prescott, Richard Caborn and Michael Meacher, all of whom are interventionist by nature.

Mr Prescott's team is already looking at the rules for public procurement. It is seeking to get away from the depressing orthodoxy of the past 18 years — that the cheapest cash option is necessarily the best, even when, for a few extra pounds, councils could buy energy-efficient light bulbs or put catalytic converters into their transport fleets.

The good news is that, even under the Iron Chancellor, the Treasury can be expected to take a more progressive view than under the Tories; there will be a proper cost-benefit analysis rather than gratuitous cheese-paring.

At the Department of Trade and Industry, Margaret Beckett is interested in setting up a public-private joint-venture company that would help fledgling environmental businesses export more. This will dovetail with the "Green Globe Task Force" that has been set up to advise Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and environmental protection minister Meacher.

It has three main priorities — a bigger share of the global environmental technology market, to ensure that free trade is compatible with a safe environment, and to identify tougher targets to cut emission of harmful gases.

Greenpeace is right to point out that Labour's commitment to the environment will ultimately be judged by results, not rhetoric. There is a pressing need for the Treasury to start taxing pollution rather than jobs, for example. It is also absurd that fossil fuels and nuclear power gobbled up 88 per cent of energy subsidies in the first half of the nineties, while solar power and energy efficiency had to make do with the crumbs from the table.

But one advantage of Labour's electoral expansion from its heavy-industry heartlands into the suburbs and new towns where the new technologies prosper is that this crucial growth sector now has plenty of potential champions in Parliament. They should proclaim at every opportunity that they are glad to be green.

Factor Four, published on June 5 by Earthscan Books, £15.99

In Brief

SHELL oil group suffered a record vote against the board and was forced to accept the main arguments of its opponents when 11 per cent of shareholders supported a motion urging it to adopt higher environmental and social standards.

THE UK Office for National Statistics confirmed that the former Conservative government had met its inflation target, after the annual rate for April fell from 2.7 per cent to 2.5 per cent.

MORE than 12,000 jobs are expected to be created in Britain and across Europe following a $1.5 billion order for Airbus Industrie to supply China with 30 aircraft.

A BONUS of $155 million, worth a minimum of $1,800 a head, is to be paid by British Airways to its 58,000 employees after the company announced record profits of $1.05 billion.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates May 10	Sterling rates May 12
Australia	[illegible]	[illegible]
Austria	[illegible]	[illegible]
Belgium	[illegible]	[illegible]
Canada	[illegible]	[illegible]
Denmark	[illegible]	[illegible]
France	[illegible]	[illegible]
Germany	2.7062-2.7084	[illegible]
Hong Kong	[illegible]	[illegible]
Ireland	[illegible]	[illegible]
Italy	2,741-2,744	[illegible]
Japan	190.27-190.48	[illegible]
Netherlands	3.1421-3.1448	[illegible]
New Zealand	[illegible]	[illegible]
Norway	[illegible]	[illegible]
Portugal	281.03-281.31	[illegible]
Spain	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sweden	[illegible]	[illegible]
Switzerland	[illegible]	[illegible]
USA	[illegible]	[illegible]
ECU	1.4314-1.4328	1.4205-1.4221

FTSE100 Share Index down 24.4 at 4646.2, FTSE 250 Index down 10.0 at 4610.4. Gold down $1.25 at $344.25.

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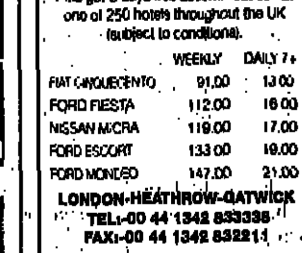


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Letter from the Dordogne Michael Woosnam-Mills

Standing by to spread the word for ecology

DENIS THATCHER, the Duke of Edinburgh, Norma Major, and now me, the most recent in a long line of second fiddles stretching back through the sculleries and backyards of history. For here in the French general election campaign, I find that my partner of 20 years and mother of my children has decided to stand for parliament.

She believes politics is a dirty business she'd rather not get into. but she also believes that politics can be kept out of public life, provided the area and the issues are local enough. A couple of years ago, she stood for the village council for the second time, and got in. And you could hardly get more local than our village: 106 inhabitants, down one since old Julienne died last month, aged 100, and 97 of them old enough to vote. There are no left-right politics, just arguments about fields and ditches, mending potholes in the roads, and whether the village can afford another rubbish skip.

So I was surprised to hear that she is standing for something as non-local as the National Assembly. Not of course that she would hope or even want to get in, and not that she's actually standing for a parliamentary seat herself: she's what is called a *suppléant*. In France's electoral system, every parliamentary candidate must have a running-mate, to stand in for him or her if necessary. The seat that our current parliamentary deputy won four years ago is today occupied by his *suppléant*, because the deputy has also become a minister in the outgoing government and may not combine the two functions.

France has a two-round voting system, with ballots on two successive Sundays. The country is divided into nearly 600 constituencies. Here in the Dordogne we have four. Ours, with about 80,000 voters, is the biggest. It is almost entirely rural: Sarlat, its only significant town, has a population of just over 10,000.

Anyone can stand in the first round, provided they registered as candidates by May 4. Most people will vote for the two biggies, the pro-Chirac RPR-UDF coalition and what remains of the Socialist party after François Mitterand so effectively castrated it during his second term as president. Round two is sure to be a run-off between, in the blue corner, Jean-Jacques de Peretti, the smooth mayor of Sarlat, elected parliamentary deputy four years ago and currently minister for France's overseas territories; and, in the pinkish-red corner, Germinal Peiro, mayor of Castelnaud, a village that cowers beneath its impressive medieval castle above the Dordogne.

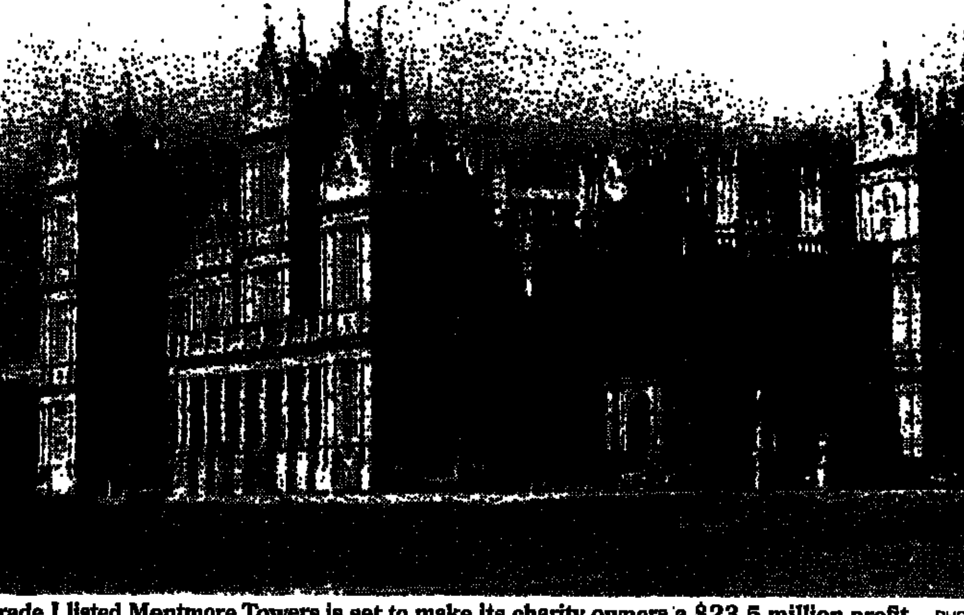
My partner's involvement in all this began with a phone call from a friend called Franck. He is a lifelong ecology activist disgusted with the way the main groups, the Verts and Génération Ecologie, have lined up with the two main parties. So he joined the genuinely independent Mouvement des Ecologistes Indépendants, and decided to stand himself.

The gist of Franck's phone call was simple. If she would agree to be his *suppléante*, he would be the candidate. Not, of course, with much hope of being elected, but in order to spread the word that "ecology" doesn't have to mean politically left or right, but putting common sense first. She agreed. So now there she is, the smiling face beside Franck's on campaign posters all over the constituency.

They won't get many votes. But they may get a decent minority the first time round.

Franck has to go on local television in a couple of days. As candidate for a party not represented in the outgoing parliament he gets the minimum, one-and-a-half minutes. Round the kitchen table we have been honing down his message to a few brief, punchy sentences, soundbites that we hope the rural people of the Dordogne will find memorable.

In this seriously pro-hunting part of France (Franck is well known as a vigorous opponent; he has had guns pointed at him), we can expect the nuisance phone calls any time now, and the 2CV may get its tyres let down a couple of times. But mostly it's good clean fun, with plenty of laughs. And if Franck and his *suppléante* do get a few people to vote for them the first time round, then it will all have been worth it.



Grade I listed Mentmore Towers is set to make its charity owners a $23.5 million profit PHOTO: SEAN SMITH

Yogic flyers hope for windfall profit

Gary Younge

THE charity associated with the Natural Law party is set to make a profit of around $23.5 million through the sale of its headquarters, it emerged last week.

The Maharishi Foundation bought Mentmore Towers, a listed Grade I building in Buckinghamshire, and 81 surrounding acres for $370,000 in 1978 and has put it on the market at a guide price of between $16-$24 million.

"There are more people with that kind of money than you would think. We are talking seriously rich, private jet material," a property consultant said.

"It is rare for a property of this calibre to be offered on the market," said Ian Stewart, director for international property consultant Savills, agents for the sale.

Over the past 19 years the foundation has been using the house, which includes five state and major reception rooms and a total of 50 bedrooms, as a centre for teaching transcendental meditation and yogic flying under the guidance of its guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The foundation has also made considerable money hiring out its grounds for films, including Rebecca and Brazil, TV programmes (Inspector Morse and Chef) and advertisements, as well as business conferences.

The foundation denies accusations that it is selling the property to subsidise the Natural Law party, all of whose candidates lost their deposits in the UK general election on May 1. It insists that while both it and the party share similar philosophies, they are financially completely separate.

The party's most famous supporter is the former Beatle George Harrison, who the foundation insists has had nothing to do with either the purchase or sale of Mentmore Towers. He staged a fund-raising concert for the party at the Royal Albert Hall before the 1992 general election.

The foundation already owns a former United States airforce base in Suffolk and several other centres in Britain's Southeast.

The chairman of the foundation's trustees, Geoffrey Clements, who is also the leader of the Natural Law party, says the charity is selling Mentmore to create a purpose-built centre so it can expand its operations. The foundation also runs degree courses in business and management.

Organisers are looking for somewhere in the Home Counties, around London, but say they have not yet found a suitable place.

Mentmore Towers was built for Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild in 1855 and designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, designer of the Crystal Palace.

A Country Diary

Audrey Insch

PERIGORD NOIR: In the Vézère valley 17,000 years ago Cro-Magnon man picked on a fossilised waterway, not as a living space, but as some kind of sanctuary. He painted on its rocky walls. In 1940, a Frenchman found his way into this Lascaux cave after subsidence following a tree fall. Now visitors can enter Lascaux II, another cave created as an exact replica of part of the original, complete with its paintings.

The power of Lascaux II is intense: vibrant horses, deer; aurochs roam over the walls with goats and bison. There's no little card giving the painter's name and dates, just astonishment. Today we walk under the same trees that those ancient artists knew: hazelnut, oak, lime, pine, hornbeam — with the addition of sweet chestnut, which, regularly coppiced, supplies posts for fences and vineyards. Rolling limestone hills support small farms. Few hedges or walls exist. The eternal red poppies glow along the roadsides: in one meadow, we counted 24 plants in flower. Others had rows of walnut trees. Everywhere acacia blossom filled the air with scent and the buzz of bees. Crickets chirped. The sun shone. Emerging on to a castle rampart, we almost collided with a swift that screamed off to alert its comrades. Inside one cave we found barn-owl pellets and signs of a nest. Jackdaws built and called around cliffs and castles. Black kites patrolled the airways.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

THE name Jerusalem means "city of peace" and Benidorm means "sleep well". Are there other similarly ironic place names?

PHILADELPHIA is the "City of Brotherly Love", but you have a one-in-five chance of being the victim of a violent crime in any given year. — *P Sanderson, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA*

BENIDORM doesn't mean *dormir bien*. It comes from the Arabic word *beni* (meaning "songs of"), like a lot of others villages in Valencia (Benitachell, Benimuslin, Benlarres). They all are old Spanish-Muslim sites. — *Angel Ocon Gimenez, Valencia, Spain*

IN reply to Alex Laidlaw (Notes & Queries, April 20): the name Buenos Aires, literally "good airs", has nothing to do with the quality of the air we breathe — which isn't bad as big cities go.

Before self-propelled ships, sailors had to depend on the right winds to reach their destination safely. So it was only fitting that, when the first Spaniards reached this (for them) remote place, they thanked the patron saint of seamen, Santa Maria de los Buenos Aires, or St Mary of the Good Winds, by baptising this city after her. — *Roberto Asseo de Choch, Buenos Aires*

CHAMBERS English Dictionary defines "haplography" as "the inadvertent writing once of what should have been written twice". Is this the most useless word in the English language?

IN other languages, two possible contenders for useless are: *riman*, the sound of a stone thrown at a boy (Arabic); and *tsujigiri*, "trying out a new sword on a chance passer-by" (Japanese). — *Joe Kerrigan, Marsh, Huddersfield*

WITH air pollution and deforestation, has there been any significant change in the proportion of oxygen in the atmosphere in the last 150 years?

THE carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere has risen from 0.03 per cent to 0.035 per cent over the past 150 or so years, or about 16 per cent, a significant increase in view of the contribution to global warming that this gas makes. The rise is due, in part at least, to the burning of carbon-containing fossil fuels and wood, during which an equivalent volume of oxygen is used up. However, since there is vastly more oxygen (at 20 per cent) than carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the proportional reduction of oxygen is insignificant. — *Roderick N Sykes, Haute Garonne, France*

WHEN my children asked where they were before they were in mummy's tummy I could only come up with "Nowhere". Does anyone have a more satisfactory answer?

THEY were in the "between", according to the Tibetan Buddhist view — which accords with the intuition that "nowhere" isn't a very satisfactory answer. — *Nancy Porter-Steel, Halifax, Canada*

Any Answers?

FRIDAY May 9 was marked on the calendar as Islamic New Year. Apart from January 1, what new years are celebrated annually, and what astronomical or seasonal significance do they have? — *B Harrison, Pusdorf, Germany*

WHY do people tend to look to the left or right, up or down, when attempting to recall some thing or event? — *Marc Levy, New York City*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Readers with access to the Internet can respond to Notes & Queries via http://nq.guardian.co.uk

And now for the bad news about Aids

Drug cocktails may ease the Aids epidemic but also kill off any chance of long-term prevention, writes **Phyllida Brown**

IT IS possible to imagine that the Aids epidemic is all but over. New cocktails of two or three drugs to treat HIV have slashed death rates by around 40 per cent, closed entire Aids wards, and even made it possible for HIV-positive people to get life insurance. The prospects for people infected with the virus have been transformed.

Transformed, that is, for the 5 per cent of people with HIV who are lucky enough to live in the industrialised West. For most of the 23 million people infected with HIV worldwide, it's a different story. In countries that spend as little as $5 per person on health care each year, drug cocktails that cost $20,000 for a year's course are a sick joke. A vaccine remains the only hope of halting the epidemic in the longer term.

But that vaccine still does not exist and some scientists now fear it may be further away than ever. As better treatments have apparently brought the epidemic under control in the West, the race to press ahead with field trials of today's experimental HIV vaccines is faltering. "Every day it is more difficult to test vaccines," says Jose Esparza of UN-Aids, the UN joint programme on Aids in Geneva, Switzerland.

Earlier this month, America's National Institutes of Health, which spends $1.5 billion a year on Aids research, held its annual HIV vaccines meeting. In contrast to previous NIH meetings, when plans for field trials dominated the discussions, it was an academic affair, concerned with the finer points of immunology and the latest vaccine studies in monkeys. "The sense of urgency has disappeared," said one disappointed international delegate.

Researchers in the United States have spent the 1990s inching towards HIV vaccine trials. There have been small-scale studies of the safety of several experimental vaccines against HIV, and test-tube studies of the immune responses that they provoke against the virus. But the ultimate tests — large field trials known as "Phase III" studies that will show whether a vaccine can actually protect against HIV or not — have yet to happen. There are no active plans for Phase III trials in the US or Europe. And, although small safety studies have been done in Thailand, and a similar study is planned shortly in Uganda, no decisions have been taken or dates set for Phase III trials in either country.

And the reasons? First, scientists in America and Europe do not yet believe they have found a good enough vaccine. Instead, most are seizing the breathing space that the new treatments have created in the US epidemic to take a step back from the front line. Rather than rush to test the first available vaccines, they are turning to more fundamental research, aimed at building better vaccines that will have a greater chance of success — one day.

"With the heat off, you don't need a quick fix," says Barry Bloom at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

Bloom is a member of a high-level committee which earlier this year advised the US government's HIV vaccine researchers to put more emphasis on basic science.

This makes excellent sense in the US, says Esparza, where the epidemic is comparatively small and slow-moving. But — as Bloom acknowledges — it does not answer the short-term needs of countries like Uganda, where the risk of becoming infected with HIV in any given month is twice as high for army recruits as it is for gay men in the US. Yet since about 90 per cent of all Aids research worldwide is American-funded, America's priorities are setting the global research agenda.

In contrast to the US, many developing countries want trials to start now, says Esparza. "Their perception is that we just don't have the time to get all the scientific information that we wish we could have before we start." He argues that no one will know whether the available vaccines work or not until they are tested, and that a better vaccine will always lie just around the corner.

The slow pace of research in the industrialised countries is also worrying the pharmaceutical industry, says Esparza. Companies must develop patented ideas into products within a set timeframe, but cannot do so without trials. "The companies are really very discouraged," he says.

Esparza's pragmatic approach is echoed by Rubaramira Ruranga, a major in the Ugandan army and an Aids counsellor. "Basically, what has been going on should not be stopped unless there is good reason to believe these existing [experimental] vaccines have no potential."

THERE is a second, less subtle threat to vaccines from the new treatments. Bloom says that if US politicians think the Aids epidemic is over, they may want to reduce their investment for research into the disease. "Whenever numbers go down, the money goes away," says Bloom. "The real worry is that by the time the scientists get ready to do [trials] the politicians will feel that Aids is getting too much money, and they will put it somewhere else."

Jonathan Weber, professor of communicable diseases at St Mary's Hospital in London, thinks that although today's experimental HIV vaccines are unlikely to halt the epidemic, they could seriously dent it in countries where HIV is spreading fast. "The failure to move to Phase III is lamentable because I think that some of the existing approaches might be partially effective," he says. But fear of failure has prevented scientists from finding out, he says.

On top of these problems, the new treatments make vaccine trials difficult for a third, practical reason — at least in the industrialised countries. The cocktails of drugs make the virus almost impossible to detect in people's bodies, and if you want to find out whether a vaccine is working or not, the one thing you must be able to detect is the virus.

In the early days, scientists believed that the ideal HIV vaccine should block infection completely, just as polio or measles vaccines do. Today, almost no one still believes that this "sterilising" immunity is possible with HIV. The most promising experimental vaccines do not sterilise, but instead keep virus levels so low that they prevent disease.

To find out whether such a vaccine works in human field trials, doctors would need to monitor two groups, one vaccinated, the other not, for perhaps three years. If the number of detectable infections and the levels of virus remained consistently lower in the vaccinated group, that would show that the vaccine worked.

But now, in the US, most people who become infected are routinely offered the new drugs. People who participated in vaccine trials could not ethically be denied such treatment. As a result, says Bloom, "you have no way of knowing whether the vaccine works".

So then what? Shift trials to countries where the new treatments are unaffordable? That, many researchers believe, would be unethical. The question may become academic, at least in the richer developing countries. Brazil, for example, has just enacted laws giving all its HIV-positive people the right to the new drug therapies free of charge, although no one has said how the government will pay.

Not everyone agrees, meanwhile, that the new drugs will weaken scientists' efforts to develop vaccines. Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which conducts most of the government-funded Aids research, says the new drugs have widened the gap between rich and poor so that the West has "a moral and humanitarian obligation" to find a way to press ahead with vaccines.

There are other signs of hope, says Peter Piot, head of UNAids. For example, pharmaceutical giant Merck recently announced that it will invest in vaccines for Aids based on naked DNA.

But in the end, it is self-interest that will drive the US and other industrialised countries into vaccine trials. All nations, however rich, will eventually need a vaccine to keep HIV at bay, says Bloom. No one knows yet, he warns, how long the new drugs will last and whether, like many antibiotics, they will eventually fail as the virus develops resistance to them. "One mutant and it's over," he says.

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The Royal Opera House is reeling from the resignation of its new chief executive. What is going on in Covent Garden? **Kamal Ahmed** and **Clare Longrigg** report on a very British drama — with singing

Fight at the Opera

UNDER the watchful gaze of the main tower at Magdalen College, Oxford, a very important meeting was taking place. Significant people had been brought together at one of the city's oldest colleges to discuss a worrying issue — the future of the Royal Opera House.

Its board members were there to discuss what next for one of Britain's most venerable artistic institutions, described as "magnificent" by its supporters and "a shambles" by its detractors — of which there are many.

Two people were being watched very closely. Stage left was Genista McIntosh, the chief executive. Calm, Labour-connected and relatively new. Accessibility at the ROH is her business. Stage right was Vivien Duffield, daughter of millionaire financier Sir Charles Clore. She is the head of the Opera House trust and a formidable fund-raiser. The exclusivity of the ROH is her business.

The weekend was described as a "brainstorming session" and the meetings were described as "good-natured." Not quite. Four weeks later, Ms McIntosh resigned. Duffield is still there.

There are a hundred metaphors here. For Opera House read a story of the establishment versus the new meritocrats. For Opera House read "culture" versus "popularism". For Opera House read an age-old battle for power. This is more than a story about bums on seats. It is story about British society. With singing.

A new plan was put on the table at Magdalen College. It was to improve "accessibility", a neutral term that hides a myriad of accusations that the Opera House is élitist.

McIntosh put forward a number of options, from the ordinary — reduce ticket prices for some performances — to the radical — make the Opera House more like those other, successful arts venues, such as London's South Bank and the Barbican. How about a shop? An all-day café? Workshops? Anything that meant that the Opera House building, in the middle of Covent Garden, was taking advantage of its position among the teeming tourists.

The idea was discussed. Interesting, everybody agreed, but care must be taken. One of the Opera House's greatest selling points, Duffield's golden prospectus, is that it is, well, so damned exclusive. Corporate donors like that kind of thing. *A lot.*

That is the see-saw on which the Opera House is caught, access versus the old, established way. One of the most telling sections from that delicious fly-on-the-wall TV documentary, The House, were pictures of the Princess of Wales settling down into her box while a mother struggled up endless flights of stairs to her cramped seat in the gods.

Was McIntosh bashing her head against a brick wall? On Friday, May 9 the game for her was over. ROH chairman Lord Chadlington, aka Peter Gummer, brother of Tory politician John, rang each board member with the news of McIntosh's decline. It was bad news, he said; a mysterious illness had apparently seized McIntosh.

"I was gobsmacked, I must admit," says one board. "It is unclear what exactly Genista is suffering from, but I think there was one word that everybody was not saying." Stress? "Yes, I think that's right."

OVER THE weekend each board member received a copious fax from Lord Chadlington. But it wasn't some form of explanation for the remarkable turnaround that has seen McIntosh, the former executive director of the National Theatre, leave her post at the Opera House after only four months.

It was actually about her successor, a matter to which Lord Chadlington had obviously given much thought. Each board member was called to an emergency meeting on Monday last week. "It was more or less a rubber-stamping exercise," says one board member. "Mary Allen was the front runner."

Allen is no stranger to Lord Chadlington. In The House documentary there is a confrontation between Arts Council heavyweights and beleaguered Opera House executives. Lord Chadlington, then the chairman of the Arts Council's Lottery Panel, is sitting beside Allen, the council's secretary general. The post-mortem of the meeting shows Lord Chadlington and Allen in perfect accord.

However well-suited she is to the job, Allen's seamless appointment is unlikely to improve the Opera House's already tarnished reputation. Lord Gowrie, the present chairman of the Arts Council, spent a weekend unsuccesfully trying to persuade her to stay in her job as secretary general. Lord Chadlington said he couldn't face going through the selection process again, and that was why such a quick succession was organised. The arts community may not be satisfied with that explanation.

"The need for transparency is greater than ever," says one insider, who described the system of appointments at the Opera House and the Arts Council as "Buggins's turn", pointing out that there has been only one chairman of the Opera House who has *not* also chaired the Arts Council, which is the House's major funder.

In the end the fight between access and exclusivity, the ongoing battle between art and business, was never resolved. McIntosh knew her time was up. In the press release announcing her departure Lord Chadlington devoted six lines to McIntosh and 12 to Allen. Exit stage left, McIntosh, from this very British drama. With singing.

Both McIntosh and her predecessor Isaacs were distinguished by their attention to artistic concerns as well as management skills. But it looks like the business heads and the establishment have won the latest round.



Bringing the House down

RECITAL
Stephen Moss

HALF an hour before Luciano Pavarotti appeared, a scream pierced the Covent Garden foyer. A middle-aged woman, evidently determined to get in without a ticket, was crying to be admitted. Mad, of course; a part in Lucia Di Lammermoor a distinct possibility.

Yet you could not help but sympathise with her: this was a Great Event, a rare chance to see the great man without getting soaked. His first recital at Covent Garden for 18 years; his last before the House closes for redevelopment; perhaps — because he is now 61 — his last substantial performance on the stage where he established his career in the 1960s.

This wasn't a typical Covent Garden audience; it was a Pavarotti audience, come to worship.

Pavarotti is now such an iconic figure that he could turn up, beat out a few bars from Puccini on the spoons and win a tumultuous ovation.

His voice remains a magnificent instrument. The choice of numbers was careful — he may not now be capable of the bel canto pyrotechnics of old — but his attack, the beauty of his phrasing and his sheer musicality are undimmed. As a singer and performer who commands and engages, he has no equal.

Pavarotti's superstar status means he is now more likely to appear in a stadium than on a stage. So the austerity of this performance — with only the pianist Leone Magiera and a rather tatty red screen for company — was a welcome relief. Just occasionally the voice became strained and husky in the lower register, but for the most part his performances were masterly.

But will he return after the re-opening? Some patrons were taking no chances and had small children perched on their knees. In 70 years, as old men now talk of Caruso, they will be able to say, "I saw Pavarotti".

Please do not adjust your set this way

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

I AM WORRIED about Guy. He is the liberal, sensitive war correspondent in **Melissa** (Channel 4). Slice him how you like, this man is a sound, if soft-boiled, egg. It's just that he kicks in TV sets whenever the content displeases him. "You can't keep doing this, Guy!" a fellow reporter says mildly as yet another set implodes.

Now we've all felt tempted. Programmes could be rated from one to four boots according to the force of the temptation, but, let's face it, there would be glass everywhere.

Even when he is not kicking in television sets, Guy's behaviour is edgy. He wins the Nicholas Tomalin Award for investigative journalism by beating up a couple of South African white supremacists. In hospital he throws a jug at a clergyman. His girlfriend is killed in a car a crash and, after a period of mourning briefer than Clytemnestra's, he marries a girl he meets on the ship coming home. This is Melissa. Admittedly she is played by Jennifer Ehle, whose face glints and changes like the surface of water. Still.

Meanwhile people are dropping like flies — one shot, one drowned, one bludgeoned — and the quivering finger of suspicion points so straight at Guy that the killer just has to be someone else.

My favourite fly was Rhett Butler, a comic-tragic cameo of a heartbroken widower. At the ship's fancy dress ball, this small, fat man in his false moustache dances The Last Waltz with his wife's ashes in his arms. I was extremely sorry to see him go. Head first, as it happens, over the rail.

Melissa is Alan Bleasdale's reworking of a Francis Durbridge story. It is in five chunks over two weeks which assumes you have seven hours or so with nothing better to do. Well, do you? Durbridge, king of the cliff-hangers, is best remembered for Paul Temple and his game little wife, Steve. The suspense from episode to episode was actual agony, as if Durbridge had got a good grip on your intestines and twisted.

Bleasdale's Melissa is a de luxe production but I wouldn't say it exerts that physically painful pull. It is difficult to give a damn which of Melissa's friends — who seem to move in a cohesive clump like frog spawn — have done it. My money's on Guy's friend, George. He is so gosh darned decent and always in South Africa whenever anything happens.

Steve was inserted strategically into **Tales of the River Bank** (BBC2) like a tempting worm to catch the elusive viewer, who was likely to slip away feeling he had been told as much about barbel as anyone needs to know.

Barbel, is a fish with a droopy moustache like Bismarck. Steve, on the other hand, was staggeringly like Benny Hill, what with the upturned hat, the round specs and one of those jackets with 93 pockets, each one stuffed, so to speak, to the gills. Steve launched himself on to the river in an inner tube and propelled himself with homemade flippers. He thought the fish took him for a duck. Underwater photography, a charm of this series, probed the truth of this theory.

Many of the fishermen seemed to be in flight from the wife. We'll come to women next week. Remind me to tell you about the man who used his wife's pubic hair to tie a salmon fly.

Shorter Hamlet electrifies

THEATRE
Michael Billington

FAREWELL Fortinbras. Exit Norway. Goodbye to "How all occasions". Matthew Warchus's new three-hour **Hamlet** at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre ruthlessly excises many familiar landmarks. But, while there is much I would argue with, this is one of the most exciting main-house Stratford productions in years and boasts a first-rate Prince in Alex Jennings.

Warchus hasn't just cut the play: he has totally re-aligned it. He begins with an image of a besuited Jennings gravely emptying the ashes from his father's urn against background film of his boyhood self romping with his dad in the snow, then cuts to a gaudy wedding party, all balloons and fireworks, in which the mature Hamlet is a looker-on taking Polaroids of the canoodling Claudius. Clearly this production is going to be about a wounded individual rather than the rank corruption within a tyranny.

Vital elements go missing in the process: by cutting the war with Norway and the ultimate invasion by Fortinbras, Warchus eliminates both the political context and the sense that Hamlet is mocked by surrounding circumstance. But, having made that decision, Warchus intelligently conflates the three existing versions of the play: thus he follows the First Quarto by putting "To be or not to be" before the arrival of the players, which makes psychological sense in that Hamlet's suicidal indecision precedes positive action. He also includes scenes — such as Horatio's reassurance to Gertrude that her banished son is safe — that we have never seen before.

But the virtue of this production is that it makes even the most hardened Hamlet-watcher feel he or she is seeing the play for the first time; and this comes through both the stagecraft and Jennings's electrifying performance.

This is no pale, reflective Hamlet but an almost Dostoevskyan figure who has determined on a course of action and finds himself defeated at every turn. I suspect he could become as much an emblem of the times as David Warner's student-scarved version was in the sixties.

Like everything in this production, the design — down to the use of shadow-play for The Murder Of Gonzago — comes across as fresh-minted: the result is a radical rediscovery of an old play in which Hamlet becomes a thwarted man of action, who poses a genuine threat to Claudius's safety, rather than an introspective weakling.

A new American musical about politics? Sounds promising. But although **The Fix**, with book and lyrics by John Dempsey and music by Dana P Rowe, has bags of attack, it is eventually undone by its own cynicism.

If the show doesn't work, it is because it lacks the basic ingredient of satire: a moral positive or an implied alternative vision. But it is given an all-stops-out production at the Donmar Theatre, London, by Sam Mendes, is designed by Rob Howell with glittering economy, and contains buoyant performances from John Barrowman, Philip Quast, Kathryn Evans, and Krysten Cummings.

Chekhov famously described **The Seagull** as "a comedy with . . . a landscape (view of a lake), lots of talk about literature, little action and a ton of love". And Peter Hall's production at the Old Vic, in a new version by Tom Stoppard, is a largely successful attempt to go back to the author's intentions. This is Chekhov played with lightness, irony and speed, and none of that woozy nostalgia we falsely dub "Chekhovian".

Two cavils only. The pressure of the Old Vic repertoire means the production has yet to achieve the molten inevitability that characterises the best Chekhov. Hall also follows convention by placing the interval after the second act. But in his 1990 RSC production Terry Hands put the break between acts three and four, between which two years have elapsed — and it was a revelation. One suddenly realised that the characters who show any capacity for change are tragic, while those who remain locked inside their own egos are comic.

But, for the most part, Hall's production is refreshingly free of Chekhovian cliché. For a start, Stoppard's translation balances a stream of Hamlet quotations with endless verbal felicities. Hall also sees that Chekhov's characters mostly walk in a self-centred dream, never quite listening to what anyone else says.

You see this most clearly in Michael Pennington's excellent Trigorin. Victoria Hamilton's Nina also has exactly the right fame-hungry self-centredness.

Felicity Kendal gives us a good, if unsurprising, Arkadina, and Dominic West is a properly anguished, fretful Konstantin. But the strength of the production is in the smaller roles: in David Yelland's calm, precise Dorn; in Greg Hicks's clumsy, awkward schoolmaster; and in Janine Duvitski's Masha. The paradox of Chekhov is that he wrote ensemble plays for non-listening soloists, and in Hall's brisk and freshly imagined production the solipsistic egoism quite properly prevails.

Spooked . . . Hamlet (Alex Jennings, right) meets the Ghost (Edward Petherbridge) PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL LIBBERT

Nostalgia for a fallen warrior

CINEMA
Jonathan Romney

ONE thing is certain about **When We Were Kings** — it's not the film that Leon Gast originally set out to make. In 1974, he went to Zaire to film the "Rumble in the Jungle" — the historic fight in Kinshasa between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman. If the film had been completed then, it could have been a raw document of boxing history, a piquant, sometimes comic look behind the scenes, and a powerful celebration of black America. The fact it took 23 years to finish means that it's still all of these things, but only to an extent and only incidentally.

Gast's film has finally emerged as a piece of pop culture nostalgia, and as a eulogy to a fallen warrior. Seeing Ali on stage at this year's Oscars — where the film won Best Feature Documentary — you were bound to feel choked as you considered the distance between that stooped figure, with his coordination wrecked by Parkinson's, and the young man on screen, a whirlwind of dynamism.

You almost wish the film didn't offer such a vivid reminder of Ali at his peak, or such a vigorous celebration of the game that many blame for his decline. As the title suggests, Gast's film harks back to a moment of pride and optimism in seventies black America that found a special focus in Ali the fighter, rhetorician and activist. There's a brief review of Ali's career as African-American hero in the ring and in front of the TV cameras, a career of heroism that had its real peak not in the Zaire fight, but in his refusal to fight in Vietnam.

With its soundtrack brought up to date by the Fugees' rap, the film sets out to remind young black America of Ali the icon and role model.

Unfortunately, the sense of legacy engulfs the immediacy of Gast's reportage. In fact, some of the more telling revelations about the Kinshasa extravaganza are provided by the pundits who were there — writers Norman Mailer and the languidly patrician George Plimpton.

There's little on show that isn't directly or indirectly an advert for Ali's glory. Glory it is, unmistakably. For a man who moved so fast, Ali was one hell of a stand-up. He does a dazzling comedy routine at a press conference, firing off salvoes of snappy self-advertising copy: "Only last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalised a brick! I'm so mean I make medicine sick!"

The loser in this war of soundbites was George Foreman — Ali was able to persuade the world, Africa included, that he was the indisputable bad guy. Foreman wasn't entirely without charisma, but by concentrating so exclusively on the Ali legend, the film ends up short-changing him again.

For all the talk about the fight serving as a vital conduit between black America and Africa, there's too little interest in Africa itself. We get a few shots of children cartwheeling in the streets, but little comment from Africans about what the match meant to them.

As a look back at cultural history, the film doesn't begin to offer any serious analysis of Ali's political and mythical importance. And as a straight account of the fight, you only wish it had managed to be as partisan, eccentric and fully-rounded as Mailer's book, in which Ali seemed all the more heroic because we saw his depressive moments too. This is too big a story to capture in 87 minutes.

Jacques Audiard's recent A Self-Made Hero was about a man piecing himself together, inventing an identity out of whole cloth. In Audiard's earlier film **Regarde Les Hommes Tomber** (See How They Fall), made in 1993 and now given a limited release, the characters may reinvent themselves, but what we see mainly is the ghastly spectacle of people falling apart.

Audiard's debut is a noir thriller that interweaves two ostensibly unrelated strands. One track follows two mismatched vagrants: old, weatherbeaten Marx (Jean-Louis Trintignant) and confused innocent Frédéric (Mathieu Kassovitz). The other follows a travelling salesman (played by Jean Yanne) as a man who has a nervous breakdown of sorts as he investigates a shooting.

This is an existential thriller par excellence. It's a film to get lost in, and to come out of feeling shattered and dazzled. If A Self-Made Hero impressed you, rest assured this is 10 times as good, and much stronger stuff.

For a film that offers a close-up look at insect life, there's only one thing truly flesh-creeping about **Microcosmos**, and that's the title song, performed by a choir of French schoolchildren. Five years in the making, Microcosmos evokes a single day in the undergrowth of a meadow, and that strange sound you can hear in the background is the audience oohing and aahing. There are some breathtakingly strange visions here.

The emphasis on the glories of colour and texture may stun the senses, but ultimately turns nature into an aesthetic spectacle. Still, there are sights here you've never seen before — most memorably, the mating dance of two snails, which suggests some nightmarish new genre of sci-fi porn.

Cannes hails British actress

John Ezard and Derek Malcolm

BRITISH actress Kathy Burke won Best Actress Award at the 50th Cannes film festival on Sunday night for her role as an alcoholic's battered wife.

Burke won for her performance in Nil By Mouth, a savagely realistic story set in Bermondsey, south-east London and directed by the British star Gary Oldman.

The film is Oldman's semi-autobiographical account of a family destroyed by an alcoholic father who beats his wife. In one scene actor Ray Winstone as the father punches Burke, causing a miscarriage, before striding out of the house.

Oldman's first film as a director was also tipped for the festival's Grand Jury Prize. But that went to the Canadian director Atom Egoyan's The Sweet Hereafter, about a community in Canada trying to recover from a major tragedy.

Another British director, Tessa Sheridan, won Best Short Film prize for Is It The Design On The Wrapper?, which cost less than $20,000 to make.

Sean Penn, Madonna's ex-husband and former Hollywood "bratpack" actor, won Best Actor award for She's So Lovely directed by his fellow American Nick Cassavetes.

To almost everybody's surprise, the Palme d'Or for Best Film was shared by the Japanese Shohei Imamura for The Eel, a tragicomic story of a wife murderer trying to rehabilitate himself, and the Iranian Abbas Kiarostami for The Taste Of Cherry, about a man determined to commit suicide. The jury president, the French actress Isabelle Adjani, also announced a special 50th Anniversary Prize, which was awarded to Egypt's Youssef Chahine, aged 75, for his life's work.

Some called the prizes eccentric and others imaginative, but there were reports of division among the jury and observers were unable to predict winners out of the 24 films in contention.

Strong English and American backing was voiced for Welcome To Sarajevo, British director Michael Winterbottom's hard look at the Bosnia conflict, but many French critics loathed it, preferring Destiny, an Egyptian film by Youssef Chahine.

Cannes roll of honour: **Palme d'Or:** The Taste of Cherry, by Abbas Kiarostami (Iran) and The Eel, by Shohei Imamura (Japan); **50th Anniversary Prize:** Youssef Chahine, Egypt, director of The Destiny; **Grand Prize:** The Sweet Hereafter, Atom Egoyan, Canada; **Best Actress:** Kathy Burke in Nil By Mouth, Britain; **Best Actor:** Sean Penn in She's So Lovely, USA; **Best Director:** Wong Kar-Wai, Happy Together, Hong Kong; **Best Screenplay:** James Schamus, The Ice Storm; **Jury Prize:** Western, Manuel Poirier, France; **Best Short Film:** Is it the Design or the Wrapper? Tessa Sheridan, Britain; **Jury Prize for Short Film:** Leonie, by Lieven Debrauwer, Belgium, and Les Vacances by Emmanuelle Bercot, France

Seeds of civilisation

Tim Radford

Guns, Germs And Steel:
A Short History of Everybody
for the Last 13,000 Years
by Jared Diamond
Cape 480pp £18.99

THIS is a book about why things are as they are. It is about why almonds are domesticated but acorns aren't, and why hunter-gatherers in a landscape where barley and emmer wheat grew wild had a head start in the sprint to civilisation and civilisation's weapons of conquest: guns, germs and steel. Up front and at bottom, it is a book which tackles the liberal dilemma: if native Australians or Cherokee tribesmen are so wise and so able, how come we took their lands and they didn't take ours?

History is about brute facts, but the one Jared Diamond starts with is that they may be every bit as smart as we are but we had the guns, and we had the guns because geography and botany stacked the deck one way rather than another. Diamond is a man with a writer's eye and a wellspring of humane decency. But best of all he is a biologist with 30 years' experience in the field. It is this sureness with the details of how things are that lends solidity to his argument.

Wild almonds are bitter: as a defence against predators they contain amygdalin, which breaks down to cyanide. Chew enough of them and you will die. But every now and then one of them has a genetic accident: a mutation makes the nuts sweet, not bitter. In the wild, such trees are stripped by birds immediately. Hunters would have gathered them too, and eaten them: new trees with the inherited mutation would have sprung up around human latrines and middens. Arboriculture began by accident.

Wild wheat and barley grow on stalks that shatter spontaneously, dispersing the seed on the ground. It is the plant's strategy for survival. There is a single gene mutation that ought to be lethal to wheat in the wild: the stalk doesn't shatter, and the ripe seed stays on the stalk, far from the soil. When hunters gathered wild seeds, those were the ones they gathered. When they ploughed, those were the seeds they planted. Peas, too are supposed to "pop" from their pods: the only ones humans would harvest would be mutants that didn't. For both peas and wheat, unconscious selection by humans turned "bad" genes into good.

But when it came to acorns, humans weren't the only ones doing the selecting. So were squirrels: billions of them were spreading acorns everywhere, selecting "squirrel-sized" acorn producers. Humans didn't get a chance to select oak orchards to suit themselves: in consequence, humans eat acorns — rich in starch and oil, nutritionally valuable — only in times of famine.

The other thing was that the staples of agriculture were distributed unfairly. Out of 200,000 flowering plant species, 12 provide 80 per cent of the tonnage of the planet's food. The cereals to go for are the ones with big seeds, easy to get at. There aren't many of those. Of the 33 large-seeded grass species of west Asia, Europe and North Africa that might provide food, 32 grew in the eastern Mediterranean, one in England.

Wheat and barley, peas and lentils grew wild in the Fertile Crescent. Ten thousand years ago, hunter-gatherers in Anatolia could have plucked wild wheat at the rate of a ton per hectare: 50 kilocalories of food for one kilocalorie of effort. It was worth learning how to store grains, how to roast them, how to make stone sickles and grindstones. Once humans were settled and experimenting with technology, other things followed.

People in the Fertile Crescent also had sheep and goats: easy to domesticate, good for food. In the New Guinea highlands, on the other hand, there were no animals at all to domesticate. Wheat and pulses are rich in protein, but taro and sweet potato are not. Geography dealt one group a winning hand, but not the other.

Sometimes, Diamond's argument is simple but stunning: why faster development in Europe than in Africa, the land where man began? Because Europe runs east to west, Africa north to south. Migration and traffic in Europe was easier because the climate zone was the same: crops and animals domesticated in one place could be moved to another. In Africa zones differed violently in rainfall, day length, habitat, pests and predators. This is history with its feet on the ground. The racist argument is rejected not because it is hateful: it is rejected because it is wrong. We are equal, Diamond says. The playing fields, however, are not.



A Kayapó tribesman: from The Decorated Body: A World Survey of Body Art (Thames & Hudson, £45)

If you would like to order this book at the special discount price of £14.99 contact Books@The Guardian Weekly (see advert below)

New fiction

Lucy Atkins

Tales of Burning Love, by Louise Erdrich (Flamingo, £6.99)

ERDRICH here revisits her familiar midwestern landscape of disempowered, colourful characters in small towns like Fargo and Argus, and hinges the tale on an unoriginal narrative device. The portrait of a man, Jack Hauser, emerges through the stories told about him by his ex-wives after his death. The humour and anecdotal conviction ensure that what the novel lacks in surprises, it makes up for in charm.

A Regular Guy, by Mona Simpson (Faber, £15.99)

SIMPSON is a fine chronicler of family dysfunction. In this, her third novel, a young girl, Jane, lives with her mother in a series of communes, until she is packed off to live with her wealthy father, Owens, who has made millions in genetic engineering before he's 30. Owens is selfish and work-driven, and the rest of the book documents their growing relationship through the banalities of everyday life. Despite a talent for atmosphere, there is a curious detachment in Simpson's writing and, though enjoyable, the novel lacks pace.

One Day as a Tiger, by Anne Haverty (Chatto, £9.99)

MARTY gives up his academic career in Dublin to return home to rural Ireland and the farm he half-owns with his brother, Pierce. Out of curiosity they buy a genetically-engineered lamb, Missy, which becomes Marty's pet, and upon which Marty's thwarted need for affection and love is focused. A growing passion for Pierce's wife Ettie comes to a head in a dramatic climax, but the novel remains a quiet meditation on different kinds of love.

Stuff, by Joseph Connolly (Faber, £14.99)

CONNOLLY'S "plot" is a line of events leading ever further into a quagmire of dissolution: vicious dominatrix Emily and her hapless husband Kevin run an interior design business; bitter and destructive Raymond has a PR company, actually run by his assistant, mad Amanda, whom Raymond's wife (drunken Maureen) nearly burns to death when she sets the house on fire. Raymond and Emily have regular sex while trying to bed each other's equally flawed children, who are also sleeping together; while Kevin — who can blame him? — longs for romantic escape. The reader must be prepared to put aside all desires for subtlety or compassion.

Fashion victim of the psychedelic '60s

Charles Saumarez Smith

The Roy Strong Diaries 1967-1987
by Roy Strong
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 461pp £20

THIS is a much more serious and substantial work of social record and self-revelation than the gossip excerpts in British newspapers would have you believe. It charts the progress of its author from the moment when he was appointed director of the National Portrait Gallery, aged 31, young, slightly faux-naïf, highly ambitious, and with an established reputation as a scholar in the field of Elizabethan portraiture. His rise from the basement of the National Portrait Gallery into the highest stratosphere of media stardom was, by any standards, an extraordinary one. Within a year of his appointment, he was consorting with everyone who was anyone, from dowagers to David Hockney, from Mick Jagger to the Queen Mother. He had abandoned his grey suit in favour of his signature moustache. He was a child of the sixties, funny, clever, grammar-school educated and happy to ignore the warning shots from his trustees who suggested that he should have his hair cut.

There is an intriguing subtext here, which is how he transformed the National Portrait Gallery from a small, slightly subfusc and under-staffed institution into a new type of museum, responding intelligently to contemporary culture, willing to consider new media, and treating its displays as a form of theatre, with exhibitions which were capable of attracting huge numbers of visitors.

In 1973, a chill wind entered this charmed life in the person of Sir John Pope-Hennessy, a cold and upper-middle-class mandarin who was not a member of the smart social set to which Roy Strong now belonged. Pope-Hennessy encouraged him to apply for the post of director of the V&A, which, with Pope-Hennessy's blessing, he got. On November 11 1973, he wrote to his Dutch friend Jan van Dorsten that: "Never since Moses came down from the mount has anything been so optimistically awaited as my arrival." This was far from the truth, as he soon discovered.

The keepers of the various museum departments regarded him as a parvenu and did everything in their power to make his life hell, in which they pretty much succeeded. By May 28, 1974, he was writing: "I know only too well the ghastliness of administration. At the V&A it is mountainous! So much time goes on unions, staff delegations, pay claims, warders' conditions, works programmes, frantic appeals for money, terrifying cliff-hanging negotiations with the Treasury etc." In 1975, he had the nightmare task of having to impose a 25 per cent cut on staff and made the decision to close the V&A's circulation department, which was responsible for sending exhibitions into other parts of the country.

His staff blamed him for the cut although it was quite clearly imposed by central government. Although he continued to put a brave face on his circumstances and, indeed, accomplished a great deal at the V&A, which it is useful to have properly documented, his life never recovered the heady success of the late sixties and, by 1987, he was only too happy to retreat to his house and garden in Herefordshire, aged 52.

The diaries reveal many of his virtues as well as some of his vices. All his life he has worked extraordinarily hard and it is striking that, even when he is going off to parties every night, he is still getting up early to write his books. He is clearly passionately devoted to his house in Herefordshire and to his wife, Julia. As a historian, he has a good eye for detail, particularly where it involves the history of dress and food.

But what also comes across is the extent to which he may have been too successful too early for his own good. During the late sixties he spent most of his time with people who were several years older than him, so that, by the mid-eighties, he appeared in some ways slightly misplaced, a relic of a past era; and although he made strenuous efforts to adapt himself to the meaner and leaner spirit of the eighties, his heart really belongs to the freedoms of the sixties, a sort of psychedelic version of a museum official, half an academic and half a pop celebrity.

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Play it again Bogie

Philip French

Bogart
by A M Sperber and Eric Lax
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 676pp £20

THE UNTIMELY death of Humphrey Bogart in January 1957 occasioned an emergency meeting of the Committee of the Oxford University Film Society and a decision to arrange a memorial screening of The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre. No other performer would have invited such a tribute from us; undoubtedly, Bogart played a part in shaping our tastes and behaviour.

But the Bogie cult is generally thought to date from the mid-sixties, when Bogart revivals, beginning at the Brattle Cinema near the Harvard campus, brought him to a new generation of Americans and a slew of books about him appeared. By the end of the decade, he had become a legendary figure as moral adviser to Woody Allen's timorous movie critic in Play It Again Sam, and he had also become a verb, to bogart a joint — meaning to hang on too long to a shared spliff.

But what of his reputation now, 40 years after his death and two years before the centenary of his birth? Surprisingly, despite the cult status of Casablanca, he did not appear in the top 10 when a recent poll was taken to determine America's favourite movie actors (the list was headed by John Wayne, the only dead star to figure on it). But while I would no longer describe him as the greatest male star of the talkies (Cagney, Robinson, Grant, Tracy and Wayne are his peers), he remains a compelling actor, and this enormous new biography gives us the opportunity to reconsider his career and persona.

Its joint authors never met. When she died in 1994, Ann M Sperber had devoted seven years to the project and had conducted 200 interviews with Bogart's family, colleagues, childhood friends and such people as the Beverly Hills Hotel bellboy who hasn't forgotten a stingy 10-cent tip, and the make-up artist who fashioned his toupees and claims to have been his mistress. Eric Lax, authorised biographer of Woody Allen, took over her "quarter-ton of research" and shaped it into a coherent, highly readable book that carefully places a complex, contradictory man in the context of his times.

Born on the last Christmas Day of the 19th century, Bogart was the scion of a patrician New York family who made his name playing gangsters; a natural rebel who accepted (though none too gracefully) the servitude of the Hollywood studio system; a charming, considerate Dr Jekyll when sober, a cruel, bullying Mr Hyde when drunk.

His father was a rich physician, son of a farmer and innkeeper; his mother a gifted, well-paid illustrator, known as "the American Kate Greenaway". Both were alcoholics and morphine addicts, who neglected their son and two daughters, and left them with violent servants. Lax suggests that all of Bogart's life was a reaction against the falsity of his parents' world, starting with his joining the navy as a rating in 1917 and drifting into the theatre on being demobilised.

His unconventional good looks made an immediate impression, but his career did not take off in either the theatre or cinema until the mid-thirties, and his first three disastrous marriages were to actresses far more successful than he. When finally he made a fourth, happy marriage to Lauren Bacall, she was 25 years his junior and had become a star in her first film, playing opposite him in To Have And Have Not.

He was 35 when he was given his first major stage role, as the gangster Duke Mantee, symbol of American energy and free enterprise, in The Petrified Forest, and recreated the part in the film when its star, Leslie Howard, who controlled the screen rights, wired Warner Brothers, "No Bogart No Deal". Under contract to Warner Brothers for the next 18 years, he never returned to the theatre. But the studio did not know how to use him, and it was not until the forties that he became a real star, in roles that George Raft turned down — High Sierra, his best gangster part, and The Maltese Falcon, his first romantic hero. Casablanca confirmed his stardom, and his rueful, cynical, idealistic Rick Blaine symbolised America at war. If there is one moment that above all reflects Bogart's authority, it is that nod to the band at Rick's Café Americain that instructs them to defy the Nazis and play the Marseillaise.

Bogart belonged to the black-and-white era (he made only five Technicolor films) and to the contemporary urban world. He was distinctly unhappy as a frontier villain in his two Westerns, and one is astonished to read that Jack Warner even offered him the role of Horatio Hornblower. But while we think of him as a romantic figure, even if sometimes a tough egg — such as Charlie Alnutt in The African Queen — he most often played psychotics, psychopaths, men tumbling over into madness, as in Sierra Madre, and The Caine Mutiny.

Sperber and Lax bring out his sensitivity and intelligence, and while not ignoring the dark side, they give due attention to Bogart's decency and courage. In the late thirties, he was caring both for a mentally disturbed sister (the other sister had died of alcoholism at 35) and his depressed, penniless widowed mother, while coping with a disruptive, alcoholic wife. His happy post-war marriage and professional success were threatened in 1947, when he was subjected to a vitriolic attack from the political right, aided by the FBI. He was compromised by his half-hearted apology for leading a delegation of film people to Washington as a member of the Committee for the First Amendment, and some liberals never forgave him. But after reading this book, it is hard not to sympathise with him. Finally, the man and the screen persona came together in those final months when, as cancer took its toll and he shrank to a skeletal 65 pounds, he faced death with stoical humour and no trace of self-pity.



Bogart and Bacall in To Have Not And Have Not

Young minds put at risk?

Kate Watson-Smyth

THE judges of a British literary award for children's fiction — won in the past by such favourites as C S Lewis and Richard Adams — have been accused by parents and teachers of shortlisting books about drug abuse and bullying that could do "psychological harm" to children.

The eight nominations for the Carnegie Medal, the major prize for children's literature, cover topics such as teenage heroin addiction, arson, bullying and thieving — a far cry from the jolly adventures many adults would remember from their childhood.

Nick Seaton, chairman of a parents' lobby group, the Campaign for Real Education, said he believed such topics could do psychological damage. "The judges should be looking for books that present the happier side of life. I do not think it is idealistic to want to shield children from issues like drug abuse and bullying.

"Most children will never experience these things, and sensitive children will get the wrong picture of life from reading them. I appreciate that children have to grow up but these books are too extreme."

The shortlist includes Bad Girls, by Jacqueline Wilson, about bullying; The Tulip Touch, by Anne Fine, about a child arsonist; and Secret Friends, by Elizabeth Laird, whose bullied heroine dies of a heart problem during surgery to stop her ears from sticking out.

Melvin Burgess, whose book Junk, about teenage heroin addiction, is on the shortlist and won the Guardian Children's Fiction Award in March, said: "One girl was upset by descriptions of a teenage mother injecting heroin and rubbing it on the gums of her baby to quieten it. But if the book was going to work it had to be authentic."

Last year's Carnegie Medal winner, Philip Pullman, whose book Clockwork is shortlisted this year, said: "You cannot ring-fence childhood. Children should have a dose of artistic truthfulness."

Nick Tucker, a child psychologist at Sussex university, said: "Junk is a profoundly moral book, and I would wish every child to read it. Children want to know about drugs and alcohol abuse."

The nominations are: Melvin Burgess for Junk; Michael Coleman for Weirdo's War; Anne Fine for The Tulip Touch; Elizabeth Laird for Secret Friends; Terry Pratchett for Johnny & the Bomb; Philip Pullman for Clockwork; Chloe Rayban for Love in Cyberia; and Jacqueline Wilson for Bad Girls

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Portraitist of a lost rural world

OBITUARY

Laurie Lee

ONE of the earliest memories of Laurie Lee was of a small boy sitting in the village street at Slad, Gloucestershire, surrounded by attentive old men. He was reading aloud news of the first world war. "This boy and I were both the inheritors, after centuries of darkness, of our country's first literate peasantry," Lee wrote.

It was a gift and a background to which Lee, who has died aged 82, remained faithful while growing into one of the most treasured prose writers of his age. His return to Slad, after the success of Cider With Rosie, made the village into a fabled place. In old age Lee would bump into tourists who had come to see his grave.

The scope and form of his work was slender: the autobiographical sketches for which he is famous, early poems that are now little-read, essays which at their old-fashioned worst verged on the belle-lettre. Yet he had a nightingale inside him, a capacity for sensuous, lyrical precision rare in writers 10 times more grandiose.

His stock-in-trade was a lost rural world and he was promoted as part of the nostalgia industry. But the 6 million readers who bought Cider With Rosie did so for reasons more personal than that. He managed to offer them his eyes, to transfer to them his own exactitude and intensity of seeing.

Lee's mother Nancy was a coachman's daughter, his father Reg a sailor's son. Reg was a Stroud widower with four children when she became his housekeeper. Laurie, whose birth was never registered, was one of four further children they had. While he was a child, his father decamped. The son was brought up by his mother and his elder sister Marjorie inside the warm, sometimes hungry family.

He left school at 14 to be, briefly, an office boy. His father sent him £1 to buy a bow for an old violin he found. With it he formed a dance band when he was 16 and toured Gloucestershire.

In 1934, at 19, he left Slad and walked to London. He stayed away 20 years. He worked as a builder's labourer, wrote poetry and joined the Communist Party. In 1935 he took his violin on the first of two walking trips to Spain, finding it still a semi-feudal country where a youngster who played lively music could live on his wits, financially and sexually. He was rescued by a Royal Navy destroyer when Malaga fell to Franco. In 1936-37 he returned to a grimmer Spain; was arrested twice as a suspected spy and shot a soldier dead while fighting for the Republic. Spain eventually generated two of his most praised books, As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning (1969) and A Moment of War (1991).

During the war he got jobs with the GPO, Crown and Green Park film units and as publications editor for the Ministry of Information, making documentaries in Cyprus and India. His first book of poems, The Sun My Monument, came out in 1944; his final output totalled four volumes containing only 67 poems.

He turned to prose after becoming convinced he had lost the passion needed for poetry. Cider With Rosie took four years to write. It brought instant hosannas.

In his long old age, back in Slad, he was a contented, immensely approachable figure.

In 1950 he married Catherine Polge, a niece of the sculptor Jacob Epstein, whom he first met on the way to Spain in 1936 when she was five. They were as close as two shoes.

Laurie Lee . . . lyrical precision

John Ezard

Laurie Lee, poet and writer; born June 26, 1914; died May 13, 1997

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Spring's missing choristers

Paul Evans

"ASH before the oak, we're going to have a soak. Oak before the ash, we'll only have a splash". So goes the old saying which links the timing of the leafing of trees with a prediction for the summer's rainfall. While the rest of the world suffered heavy rains and floods, Britain was gripped by the driest, burning drought for hundreds of years. And then, as the oak trees leafed and flowered (long before the ash), and the swallows appeared, down came the splash.

A few days of gentle, steady rain was the much-needed magic ingredient to fire up the sweet anarchy of spring. Then came the storms, rapid air strikes of torrential rain, sleet, even snow. Mountains were white-over for a few days. Bucket-loads of hail crashed down, indistinguishable from the fallen hawthorn blossom. The sky was so full of wild weather that immense cracks of thunder exploded the clouds to make room for more. Every few minutes the weather changes.

It may be peaceful but it's certainly not quiet. Spring's true song rings through the ecstatic woodland. Songs of sex and territory, songs of power and sacrifice — this is the sound of the exploding vernal bomb. High above the hills the swooping buzzards have lost the melancholy from their wistful mews and their call is quick and powered by muscular beats. Ravens detonate their croaks in the upper branches. Through the trees each bird fires its song, true to its own kind, into the air full of the songs of others true to theirs. The effect is not an aggregation of individual voices but a wild chorus that has unfolded since dawn, ebbing and flowing through the moods of the day. Just as the breeze carries the scent of birches and willows in one breath and larches and firs in the next, so the chorus sways and varies.

Just as the wild chorus of birdsong met the wild May weather, a disturbing report hit the headlines.



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

The report, by the government's conservation scientists and bird protection organisations, links the rapid disappearance of 11 British bird species with the increased use of pesticides on farmland. Between 1969 and 1994, tree sparrows have declined by 89 per cent, grey partridge by 82 per cent, skylarks by 58 per cent and blackbirds by 42 per cent. Pesticides which kill insects, the food plants they depend on and seed-producing "weed" species, have been responsible for the loss of many once-common birds. Chemicals are not solely responsible, and changes in other agricultural practices are also to blame — but pesticides kill birds, it's official.

This may seem like a strange revelation. After all, haven't we known this since Rachel Carson began writing about the abuses of pesticides in 1945 and started work on her seminal book Silent Spring back in 1958? Thirty-five years after its publication, rereading Carson's bleak vision of the future is an eerie experience: "The birds, for example — where had they gone? . . . On the morning that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus . . . only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh".

It's tempting to listen to the marvellous spring voices of the birds and imagine that everything is all right. But the facts suggest otherwise. There is a silence within the wild noise of spring which marks the absence of some birds we thought were safe. Here and around the world there's a hole in the chorus of rebirth that we have caused ourselves. Like oak and ash, soak and splash, have we accepted Carson's imagined tragedy of the silent spring into modern folklore?

Chess Leonard Barden

SPASSKY, Karpov and Kasparov are all former winners of the biennial world championship for under-20s, which used to be the pinnacle of attainment for young players. But it's become an annual event, and there are also world and European titles for other ages down to under-10s, so the world junior has lost some of its strength and status.

The glittering prize now is the age record for the youngest grandmaster, an honour that, since the world body Fide launched its official GM title in 1950, has been held in turn by Bronstein at 26, Spassky at 18, Fischer then Judit Polgar at 15, and Leko then Bacrot at 14.

Before 1950, it was debatable who was a GM and when, but contenders for an earlier unofficial record include Morphy, Alekhine, Keres and Fine at 21-22, and Junge (killed in the war) at 18. Simply listing these names emphasises that the youngest GMs of their time have often developed into all-time greats, while the relatively unknown Leko and Bacrot may yet do so.

When Luke McShane became Britain's youngest international master last month at Gelsenkirchen, he stayed on for another GM tournament in the German town, which he led with 5/5, then with 6/7. He lost his final two games, also to GMs, but one significant statistic was that Luke, finishing on 6/9, got within a single point of his first grandmaster result. A win in either of the last two games would have broken Leko's record of 13 years and five months for the youngest GM norm by a boy, surpassed only by Polgar, who achieved her first norm at exactly 13.

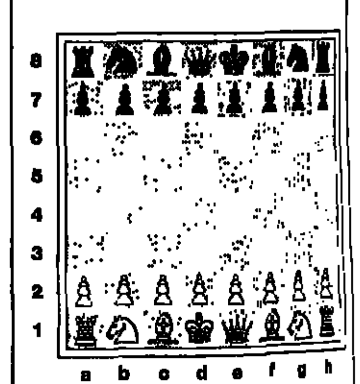
McShane's ratings for the two Gelsenkirchens, 2,510 and 2,550 Fide points, were much better than his low 2,400 performances while achieving his IM title, and suggest that he may have made a quantum jump similar to that made by Spassky, Fischer, Kasparov in their teens. Three results at the 2,600 level are needed to qualify for GM, and you also need a published Fide rating of at least 2,500.

When McShane was struggling to complete his IM title, catching Bacrot looked impossible. But now, with ten months to go, it's not. McShane will probably have 2,450 points in Fide's July ratings, slightly lower than Bacrot (who is one year older) achieved before starting the surge which included three GM norms and a 5-1 match victory over the veteran former world champion Smyslov.

French organisers helped Bacrot's campaign by arranging the Enghien tournament where he scored his final norm. Unlike the other record-breakers, McShane still attends school normally, but there is an opportunity for British organisers and sponsors to include him in suitable out-of-term events such as the Hastings Premier, in which Nigel Short played at the age of 14.

The most promising norm tournaments occur when meeting rivals of similar or slightly weaker strength. McShane will have such an opportunity in late July in an all-play-all tournament; but it will again be in Germany, this time at Lippstadt.

No 2473



A familiar position with some unusual play: can you create the shortest possible game ending in checkmate by promoting a pawn to a knight? It takes six moves or less by each side.

No 2472: 1 Qf7+ Bc7 2 Qxc7+ Kxc7 3 Rd7+ Nxd7 4 Rxd7+ Kb8 5 Bf4 mate.

Quick crossword no. 367

Across

1 Play the first card (4)
3 Whale's nostril (8)
8 Applaud (4)
9 Mental view (8)
11 Protects us from the sun's ultra-violet rays (5,5)
14 Rider's seat (6)
15 Placard (6)
17 Objections (3,3,4)
20 Beyond what is revealed (8)
21 Bird — fruit (4)
22 Lamented (8)
23 Tobacco cut into shreds (4)

Down

1 Ball game, American-Indian invention (8)
2 Large non-venomous snake (8)
4 Deadly (6)
5 Refrigerators, cookers, etc (5,5)
6 Musical work (4)
7 Paradise — Conservative Prime Minister (4)
10 US company — rags fellow (anag) (5,5)
12 Rather plump (8)
13 Urgent — ironing (8)
16 Coax (6)
18 Chewing tobacco — a pound (4)
19 Cease (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

ONE for the trivia merchants: at what sport have two pairs of twins represented Great Britain on the same team? This will happen in June, for the British Open team in the European Championships will be: Gus Calderwood and Dick Shek, Gerald and Stuart Tredinnick, Jason and Justin Hackett.

Calderwood and Shek are, as you may have deduced, not twins — one of them was born in South Africa and the other is Chinese — but both have been British citizens and very fine bridge players for many years now.

The Hacketts are twins that no one would have any difficulty in telling apart, for Justin is the one who chose at an early age to support Manchester United and therefore walks around with a permanent grin not worn by his brother. The Tredinnicks are a different matter — they are both fans of Crystal Palace, so they go about with identical gloomy expressions on their identical faces.

They are already world champions, since they were part of the team that won the world junior title in 1989, and this will be the second time that they have played for Britain at European level.

Gerald and Stuart have also won the Gold Cup, Britain's premier teams event, on two consecutive occasions. The 1994 final showed their bidding judgment to advantage on this deal, which was notable for one of the more remarkable decisions of this or any other century. East-West game, dealer East:

North
♠ A Q 8 7 5 2
♥ J
♦ K Q J 6 3
♣ 6

West
♠ K J 9
♥ K 10 7 4
♦ 10
♣ A K J 10 3

East
♠ 6
♥ A Q 9 6 5
♦ A 8 2
♣ Q 8 7 5

South
♠ 10 4 3
♥ 8 3 2
♦ 9 7 5 4
♣ 9 4 2

When the twins held the East-West cards, they were able to cope with a bold pre-emptive effort by North:

South	West Stuart	North	East Gerald
			1♥
Pass	2♣	4♠	Pass
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4NT was not Blackwood, but a general slam try showing a good hand. Stuart had no problems in the play, and scored a comfortable 1,370. This was the auction in the other room, where Derek Patterson was South:

South Patterson	West	North Collins	East
			1♥
Pass	3♣	3♥(1)	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass
6♠	Dble	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) Spades and diamonds

Six spades doubled cost only 800, so was a highly profitable sacrifice. How often have you held a 4-3-3-3 Yarborough, entered the bidding for the first time at the six level, become declarer into the bargain, and gained 11 IMPs for your pains?

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 25 1997

Cricket Tour match

Aussies undone by seam

David Hopps

SWANS idled on an abundant Severn, the Australian team coach became wedged in the mud, and a warm and overcast spring day ensured a pitch to quicken the enthusiasm of any self-respecting English seamer. If there was an occasion designed to befuddle an Australian touring party still adjusting to English conditions, Worcester supplied it last Sunday to perfection.

England's Texaco Trophy squad might be replete with all-rounders but, if they had named four times as many, Gavin Haynes and David Leatherdale would not have gained a look-in. At New Road they bowled out the Australians, before an increasingly incredulous crowd, for 121, leaving Worcestershire to stroll to a five-wicket victory.

Down Worcestershire way, the medium pace of Haynes and Leatherdale is winning increasing respect. Nevertheless, when England's chairman of selectors David Graveney called for the counties to harry the Australians at every turn, these two will hardly have been foremost in his thoughts.

To adopt the terminology of the former Australian wicketkeeper Rodney Marsh, England had thrust the pie-throwers into the front line to deadly effect. Compared with some of the dross served up by Northamptonshire last Saturday, this was glorious stuff and, with only one warm-up match remaining, Australia are in some confusion.

There are reasons not to become over-excited. Eight years ago they also lost at Worcester, and went on to win the Test series 4-0. And it did not entirely escape notice last Sunday that the innings of most substance, albeit only 32, was produced by an Australian, Tom Moody, who cannot even make the squad.

Before the match Australian television crews took footage of the cathedral, and spectators waving national flags posed for pictures with Worcestershire's mascot Peter Pear. Two hours later Australia's world was pear-shaped as Haynes's ebullient 10-over spell of four for 40 against the top order was followed by Leatherdale's abrupt dismissal of the tail.

Haynes's blossoming career was interrupted when he missed all of last season with a knee injury, but he is a proficient one-day cricketer and bowled his in-duckers with considerable spirit.

Greg Blewett looked in good order until he was bowled off his pads, and Mark Taylor (despite scores of 45 and 76) looked little closer to form in making 14, succumbing to the first of three catches off Haynes by the wicketkeeper Steve Rhodes.

Leatherdale, still regarded in his native Yorkshire as a middle-order batsman who never quite made the grade, took a wicket in each of his five overs, finishing with remarkable figures of five for 10. He is enthusiastic medium at best but the ball seamed and the bounce was uneven. Australia continued to capitulate.

Justin Langer, stretching forward, was judged lbw to Leatherdale's first ball. Brendon Julian, Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath followed to edges — Julian snapped up by the diving Moody at first slip — and Michael Kasprowicz cut him to point.

"We did not bat well enough and it is very disappointing," said Taylor. He viewed the defeat as a wake-up call. And the Australians do not sleep through many.

Earlier last week the visitors beat the Duke of Norfolk's XI by 113 runs in their opening match at Arundel.

Mark Taylor is trapped lbw by Gavin Haynes PHOTOGRAPH CLIVE MASON

Golf English Open

Victory eases Johansson's Ryder path

David Davies

THE tournament with a very English title but sponsored by an American car-rental company was won last Sunday by a Swede. The Alamo English Open, at Hanbury Manor near Ware in Hertfordshire, gave Per-Ulrik Johansson his second win of the Ryder Cup points-gathering season. He finished 19 under par with a total of 269 to beat his compatriot Dennis Edlund by two shots.

The 22-year-old Steve Webster of Atherstone was joint third with the American Jay Townsend, and with David Howell and Roger Chapman sharing fifth place the host country had three players in the top six. The overnight leader Gary Emerson could not maintain the fierce pace on a humid day and finished with a 75, to be 12 under.

Johansson had ordered the champagne before he went out, because his girlfriend was flying in to join him. "It was nice, though," he said, "to give her a victory as well."

The Swede lists wine as one of his recreations and he is more than just a collector. "I like to drink it, too," he said. "Perhaps a little Château Margaux would go down well tonight. I can afford it now."

He now stands seventh in the Volvo rankings and third in the Ryder Cup points list. He has $488,000 in the latter and, with about $560,000 needed to be sure of selection and 15 events to come, he can start thinking about the showdown in Valderrama.

Johansson has now won four times in his eight years on tour, and the latest two have contributed $373,000 to his Ryder Cup points. That means he has won only $115,000 from his other 10 qualifying events, which suggests a player far more erratic than Johansson actually is.

He grasps the club two to three inches down the grip, especially when playing into the wind, and is also working on making his swing shorter but also wider so as not to lose clubhead speed, all in the name of control.

Last Sunday he had to fight hard to ward off Edlund, a player who would have been perhaps the most surprising winner ever on tour, given his lack of achievement. In the past four years he had won only $38,000 and attended the qualifying school no fewer than eight times. He had never managed even a top-10 finish, his best being 12th in the Madeira Island Open in 1995.

But Johansson got a good break at the 10th where, after a seven-iron second had finished short of the green, he chipped in from 45 feet. If that was fortunate, there was nothing lucky about his eagle at the long 12th. "I hit a good drive and left 208 yards downwind to go. I absolutely killed a five-iron and it finished 12 feet from the hole." That gave him a lead he was never to relinquish.

This has been an impressive week for Webster, who had only three bogeys during the course of it. He won $58,500 which, with the $44,000 he already had, ends his tour-card cares.

Colin Montgomerie, never in touch with the leaders, felt that the Masters had taken more out of him than he had suspected. "I think my final-round 81 hurt me mentally," he admitted. "When I got back from Augusta my confidence was very low."

All week the Scot was complaining about his short game. "I threw away around four shots a day," he said. "Basically I wasted 12-16 shots in this tournament."

Given that he finished 11 under, the inference was that he would have won by a large margin had he played to standard around the greens.

● Helen Wadsworth, in fourth place, was top British finisher at the Players' Classic, at Tytherington, Cheshire. The winner was Australia's Karen Lunn.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Barcelona's cup of joy

A PENALTY by Ronaldo eight minutes from half-time was enough to give victory to Barcelona in the European Cup Winners' Cup final against Paris St Germain in Rotterdam.

At times the French, especially at the start of each half, showed the creativity they had produced in crushing Liverpool in the semi-final first leg, but could not match the menace of Barcelona's counter-attacks, strength and self-belief.

STAN COLLYMORE moved to Aston Villa from Liverpool for £7 million. A two-hour meeting with the 26-year-old striker convinced Villa manager Brian Little that the player was worthy of becoming the Premiership club's record signing. Collymore will be paid a salary reputed to be around £15,000 a week.

Everton meanwhile have signed Croatian defender Slaven Bilic for £4.5 million from Premiership rivals West Ham. The Merseyside club lured the 28-year-old on a lucrative five-year contract. The Euro 96 star had joined West Ham for £1.6 million just 18 months ago.

THE hopes of several British football clubs to attract Germany's captain Jürgen Klinsmann to spend the final years of his glittering international career with them were dashed with the announcement that he is to join the Italian *Serie A* side Sampdoria at the end of the season, in a one-year deal. It is likely to be the 32-year-old Bayern Munich star's last European move as he is expected to retire after next year's World Cup finals.

BROTHERS Adam and Ben Hollioake, the Surrey all-rounders, are included in England's 15-strong squad for the one-day series against the visiting Australian cricketers. For the 19-year-old Ben it is his first international call at senior level.



Ben Hollioake . . . senior call-up

Batsman Graham Lloyd, son of English coach David, is also in ahead of winter vice-captain Nasser Hussain. The rest of the squad is: Atherton, Knight, Crawley, Stewart, Thorpe, Ealham, Croft, DeFrietas, Gough, Headley, Giles and Silverwood.

MICHAEL DOOHAN of Australia, the world motorcycling champion, won his fourth consecutive Italian Grand Prix last Sunday and took his career 500cc tally to 37, level with the late Mike Hailwood. The victory was in fact Doohan's fifth in succession at the Mugello track, near Florence, having also won the San Marino GP there in 1993. The Honda rider crossed the finishing line more than 10 seconds ahead of Italy's Luca Cadalora with Japan's Nobuatsu Aoki third. It was Doohan's third victory in four races this season and it left him comfortably at the top of the table.

LORD MacLAURIN has resigned as chairman of the United Kingdom Sports Council. The departure of the multi-millionaire former chief of a supermarket chain, had been widely expected since he put his name to an eve-of-election letter warning of the danger of a Labour government. The council gave the reason for the resignation as "personal". Lord MacLaurin has been replaced, for the moment, by Sir Rodney Walker, chairman of the English Sports Council.

MOUNTING player unrest after Harlequins failed to win a trophy in their first season of professional rugby has cost Dick Best his job as the club's director of rugby. Best, who was on a 10-year contract, had been with Harlequins for 23 years as captain, coach and full-time supremo. He recruited most of the players currently at the club, but had run into serious disagreements with them over how the team should be prepared and organised.

GRAEME OBREE, who took the world 4,000m pursuit title on a bicycle made from his own design, has pulled out of international competition for the season because of financial problems. The talented Scot said: "At the moment both my cycling and my business are going downhill. I cannot train properly and I don't want to ride any events in a substandard physical condition."

SANDRA Farmer-Patrick, America's 400m hurdler, was banned for four years after testing positive for testosterone at the US Olympic trials in Atlanta last June. The news followed allegations earlier that Mary Slaney, the US middle-distance runner, had also failed a drugs test 12 months ago.

In another drugs-test case, the former tennis world No 1 Mats Wilander and the Czech Karel Novacek were banned for three months after withdrawing their appeals against testing positive for cocaine at the 1995 French Open. The two must also forfeit all ATP world-ranking points and prize-money earned since then.

IT WAS sweet revenge for Spanish tennis star Alex Corretja when he defeated Chile's gifted but wayward Marcelo Rios 7-5, 7-5, 6-3 in the Italian Open last Sunday in Rome. The two last met recently in the final of the Monte Carlo Open, where the Chilean beat Corretja 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

In Berlin, Mary Pierce's attempt to win her second title in eight days ended in failure when the French star was beaten 6-4, 6-2 by American Mary Joe Fernandez in the final of the German Open.